

From: [Dottie Spahr](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Concerns
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 10:22:35 AM

I am writing to voice my concerns about AAF's plans to run more trains through the most heavily populated areas of the Treasure Coast. I haven't seen any reports supporting the need for 16 round trips to transport passengers to and from Miami and Orlando. Has there been any feasibility study indicating passenger travel would be profitable?

It seems that the real plan is create more passage for commercial transport, which will only add more congestion to the densely populated Treasure Coast. What will happen when AAF wants to expand commercial transport beyond what's presently proposed? There will no room for it through our downtown communities.

It doesn't seem that the quality of life for Treasure Coast residents has been considered or respected. We live here 24/7. You at AAF are deciding on changes that won't personally impact your lives.

Jensen Beach
Dorothy Spahr

From: [Harry Paduano](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vzb.com
Cc: minigator64@aol.com
Subject: AAF Concerns
Date: Saturday, October 25, 2014 8:41:08 AM

Attn: John Winkle,

My wife and I are writing to express our concern with the AAF plan to operate trains that will pass thru Vero Beach 32 times a day! We are fearful that such operation will disrupt traffic and potentially cause delays in emergency vehicle traffic which could result in harm to sick individuals as well as harm to individuals and property in need of fire and police service. We encourage you to take a more responsible approach that will ensure that these harmful consequences are avoided even to the point of canceling the AAF Project. We would appreciate answers to these concerns being published after a comprehensive analysis is completed. Thank you.

Harry and Lorraine Paduano
Residents of Vero Beach

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail

From: [Matt](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF concerns
Date: Thursday, October 30, 2014 3:24:04 PM

My family and I are very concerned about the impact AAF will have on navigation at the Loxahatchee river bridge if it is allowed to proceed. In fact, we believe the problems are so great they are nearly insurmountable.

The current bridge closures are already problematic. Boats stack up on both east and west sides of the bridge while waiting. Then boats pass side by side through a narrow opening. This would not be a problem if there were very little current, but in this area the current is fierce. When the current is running, captains have to increase their RPMs to maintain steerage of their vessel.

If we add 32 additional bridge closures during the DAY (as I understand it, the AAF trains will run in the day only), we are adding 2-3 closures per hour. The AAF reports that current bridge closures are 20 minutes each time. I believe it is closer to 30 minutes and I have been caught many times when the bridge was left down until a second train came through. The double closures have taken between 1 and 1.5 hours and I am not exaggerating! Still, if there is on average 1 freight train closure per hour and we add only 2 extra closures per hour for AAF and the closure time is not dramatically improved, then the bridge will be down full time and all traffic will stop. In addition, there is an increase in freight train traffic predicted due to the expansion of the port of Miami, and this could cause even more trains per hour.

Now, the AAF says they will improve the time to only 10 minute closures. Well, if we have 4 closures per hour, that is still 40 minutes closed and if we have one extra freight train then it will be 50 minutes even with their improvements!! Still, we need solid proof that the closures can be brought down to 10 minutes. This bridge was built in 1925 and I believe it will be very difficult for AAF to really get the times down to 10 minutes.

It is hard enough to navigate the narrow channel of the Loxahatchee railroad bridge when the tide is moving. Having small windows between closures for boat traffic is bound to be problematic, especially in the summer when there are literally hundreds of boats passing through to go to the popular Jupiter sand bar and hundreds going out.

If a commuter train is needed, it certainly can be done in a different area that does not cripple our waterway navigation.

Sincerely,

**Matthew Bailey
Jupiter, Fl**

From: [Mark Loyacano](#)
To: John.Winkle@dot.gov; AAF_Comments@vzb.com
Cc: [Micco Home Owners](#)
Subject: AAF DEIS a Phase II comments, concerns, opinions:
Date: Tuesday, November 11, 2014 4:14:26 PM

Mark Loyacano
Micco, FL 32976

Mr. John Winkle
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E., Room W38-31
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Comments/Concerns/Opinion about Phase II, AAF DEIS
Sent via e-mail, November 11, 2014

Dear Sir:

AAF's Phase II DEIS is an ignoble effort to adapt the FEC's existing, old-world route system for high speed rail passenger service. It is completely understandable why AAF wants to avoid copious extra time, costs, added rigors for permit processing and significant acquisition expenses; all needed to implement an alternative Phase II route system.

But, currently, Phase II's plan is seriously flawed. Absent from the Grand Scheme, is common sense, logic, and adequate safety. Operating high speed rail services at grade level, so close to our people, buildings, and multiple road crossings bordering this very busy, old (curvy-in-places), densely populated FEC route system is ludicrous. It is still the same low-speed route, conceived over a century ago to serve and help our forebears establish Florida's coastal communities. It is the same route that was intended for bringing people, merchandise, supplies and mail from up north. Then transporting people, Treasure Coast fish and agricultural produce back to northern markets. It served transportation needs *e v e r y w h e r e* along our Treasure Coast. It brought cherished folks here to visit and enjoy Florida's natural beauty. It also brought many who stayed; to work and build a quality life here. *E v e r y o n e* has a "stake" in modern-day Florida.

AAF's Phase II will significantly augment environmental fragmentation of the Treasure Coast's human and wildlife populations/habitats. It will be degrading to our quality of life, impair access to everyday-services, inflict economic losses to our local business economy and add exponentially higher levels of risk to our safety.

Mr. Winkle, please do not approve the current AAF Phase II plan. There must be better examples of high speed rail routes and systems that can offer better guidance for their future development plans. Instead, please help the FRA and AAF to do the right thing; fully consider, carefully and logically, again, what the total impact of AAF's Grand Scheme will be. Common sense is dearly needed for what is being proposed in AAF's Phase II DEIS. Mr. Winkle, please do not allow approval of this plan.

Respectfully,
Mark Loyacano

From: [Peter Bullock](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com; john.winkle@dot.gov
Cc: [Peter \(P.B4.N\) Bullock](#)
Subject: AAF DEIS Comments - Peter Bullock
Date: Monday, November 24, 2014 5:36:22 PM
Attachments: [Comments Provided on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.pdf](#)

November 24, 2012

John Winkle
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue room W38-311
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Comments to the All Aboard Florida draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Winkle:

I offer my comments to the FRA's draft Environmental Impact Statement, published September 19, 2014. I have attached my Comments as a .pdf file to this message. I have also mailed to you today a signed hard copy.

I find this Draft EIS very troubling. The document, lengthy as it is, clearly is not an independent analysis of impacts and clearly is not an objective analysis either. Unfortunately, in many cases it is not even an analysis - where there needs to be analysis. Without question, the document has completely failed to assess and evaluate the impacts this project will have on the northern counties affected by this project.

The fundamental framing of the Purpose, Needs, and Alternatives is so blatantly self-serving for All Aboard Florida, that I find the document professionally embarrassing to have the name of a government agency such as the FRA attached to this document. From my perspective, analysis to protect general public safety is so abysmal as to border on being criminal.

If the FRA is really seeking an independent and objective analysis of project impacts and alternatives, I believe this document is unsalvageable and must be largely re-written.

Sincerely,

Peter Bullock
3120 N. Highway A1A #1505
Fort Pierce, FL 34949

From: [Bill Biggs](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com; [John Winkle](#); [Bill Biggs](#)
Subject: AAF DEIS Comments
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 9:11:53 AM

Riverwatch Marina & Boatyard
200 SW Monterey Rd. Stuart, Florida 34994
772-286-3456

Mr. John Winkle
Transportation Industry Analyst
Federal Railroad Administration
SE Room W38-311
1200 New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Winkle,

All Aboard Florida's proposed high-speed passenger train service from Miami to Orlando will in its current form, have an economically devastating impact on the South Florida Marine Industry and waterfront residents.

My family owns and operates a 400-vessel marina and boatyard located on the South Fork of the St. Lucie River in Martin County. I am also a board member with the Marine Industry Association of the Treasure Coast, an industry trade group that promotes boating and waterfront activities on the Central Florida east coast.

We have 18 commercial marinas and thousands of waterfront residents that operate west of the FEC railroad trestle on the St. Lucie River. There are thousands of others living in the southern counties that will be equally impacted. AAF's proposed schedule will effectively block marine navigation at the St. Lucie River, Loxahatchee River, and New River crossings.

The information provided to you regarding marine navigation through train bridges by AAF's consultant is so grossly flawed that it defies analysis. Marine traffic was based on the slowest navigation period of the year. The data did not take into account peak weekend traffic in the summer months which approaches 500 daily trips vs. the DEIS which underestimates traffic by 83%. The model in the DEIS also assumes unrealistic and unproven bridge cycle times which vastly underestimates the amount of time the bridge will be closed. The bridged operating models in the DEIS are wrong, your staff needs to investigate and study the data for accuracy before your decision can be concluded!

Look at the facts, the Jupiter Inlet Navigation District recorded average vessel waiting times for the Loxahatchee Bridge of 20 minutes during the month of March 2014. Two passenger trains scheduled hourly would close the bridge for 40 minutes, when a freight train is added to the traffic mix the bridge will be effectively closed the full hour and into the

next. This will devastate the South Florida Marine Industry!

Our industry group met with officials from All Aboard Florida to discuss their planned service. AAF's President, Michael Reineinger refused to recognize the enormous financial impact to our industry and offered little evidence that would support their ability to mitigate the impact to our industry.

Solutions are readily available and economically feasible. The DEIS explored some alternative train routes but missed the most promising option. AAF could detour 25 miles northwest of West Palm Beach along Beeline Highway using the CSX rail, and then use their FEC track in Indiantown to once again proceed northeast to Fort Pierce. The higher speed attained in the rural area would offset any extra distance traveled to keep the overall travel time reasonable. The track already exists. If AAF insisted on using their own track, a right of way could be granted allowing them to connect. This route would eliminate all of the problems associated with marine navigation from West Palm Beach to Ft. Pierce. This option was ignored or omitted by the DEIS and needs to be investigated by your staff.

I am asking the Federal Railroad Administration to investigate the accuracy of the DEIS and recognize the devastating impact to Martin County residents and marine navigation on our rivers. At this time I am asking you to withhold funding to All Aboard Florida for their planned passenger rail plan. When the FRA and AAF acknowledges the consequences of the passenger rail plan then we can work together to build a solution that works for everyone.

Sincerely,

William Biggs
Riverwatch Marina & Boatyard

From: SUNWRENT@aol.com
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF DEIS Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2014 11:57:56 AM
Attachments: [Final DEIS Comments.docx](#)

Attached are some of my comments regarding the Draft Environmental Statement issued by All Aboard Florida.

Jane Schnee
Sebastian, FL

From: [Cheryl Rowland](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF DEIS Comments
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 1:05:12 AM

Mr. Winkle,

Please consider this my response to the All Aboard Florida (AAF) Intercity Passenger Rail Project, Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Your draft EIS discusses three different paths for the Orlando to Cocoa corridor of the rail project. Two of the three proposed routes do not reach my property and therefore the following response would not have any impact on your findings for those routes. However, the north property line for my primary residence borders the Florida Department of Transportation land on the south side of 528 which is under consideration for the proposed 1B Cocoa Curve option of the AAF East-West corridor project and thus my comments should be reviewed for this option only.

I have been told since this is the first passenger train in many years, this study is based on estimates not facts. My concerns as a homeowner along the proposed 1B (Cocoa Curve) path are as follows:

Property Values – there is speculation the property values for the homes along the new east-west corridor, could be reduced in value due to the train system. Since this is a new endeavor, who is responsible to reimburse the homeowners if the property values drop twenty or even 50 percent. The report is based on estimates, how will this issue be mitigated?

Noise and Vibration Impact - the report states “Along the E-W Corridor, noise impacts would be primarily due to the increased noise propagation from elevated portions of track. There is potential for 105 moderate and five severe noise impacts at residential receptors and one moderate impact at an institutional receptor.” Further you state “Noise mitigation along elevated portions of track may include sound barriers on the edge of the elevated structures to mitigate potential severe impacts.” Your table 4.2.2-1 uses examples of transit at 50mph, with regard to the EW Corridor where the trains will be at speeds in excess of 100mph what affect will the trains have on the noise pollution?

Along the E-W Corridor, there is the potential for vibration impact at 118 residential and 12 institutional receptors, again the table does not reflect the speed of 100+ mph that the train will be running along the EW corridor. What impact will the train at high elevation and high speed have on my residential structure? I am concerned about the damages the vibration will cause, since this high speed rail is new and there isn't an historical data to confirm the findings.

In addition, you cite much is not known on the impact of domestic livestock and wildlife on the east coast. I found the following response to questions about a CAHST and the affect the CAHST would have on horses for this particular property. I have horses and have similar concerns about the startling of my animals when the trains pass by on an elevated track at 100+ mph. I would like to request that a screening be completed to determine the affects on

my animals and my daughter who will be riding them.

651-3

See MF-Response-NOISE-1. Also see section 3.4.3.3, Impact Assessment Guidance, and Section 3.4.5.3, High-Speed Train Alternatives, of the EIR/EIS under the heading Noise Effects on Wildlife and Domestic Animals for further information regarding noise effects on wildlife and livestock.

The FRA High Speed Ground Transportation Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (2005) considers a Sound Exposure Level (SEL) of 100 dBA the most appropriate threshold for disturbance effects, such as startling, on wildlife and livestock of all types. A screening assessment determined typical and maximum distances from the HST tracks at which this limit may be exceeded. In the vicinity of the property mentioned in the comment, the CAHST would be constructed atgrade.

Analysis indicated that along at-grade sections, the screening distance for a single-train pass-by SEL of 100 dBA would be approximately 100 feet from the track centerline for ballast and tie track and 160 feet in both directions from the track centerline for slab track. Because fences control access to the right-of-way, and the right-of-way would be 100 feet wide in rural locations, wildlife and domestic animals would have to be within approximately 50 feet of the edge of the right-of-way with ballast and tie track, and within approximately 110 feet of the edge of the right-of-way with slab track, to cause the animal to startle. Given this, if the horse and wagon rides do not include entering into this area, there would be no concern that the horses would be spooked (and therefore no subsequent concerns about the safety of the guests riding the horses).

651-4

See MF-Response-BIO-1 and MF-Response-BIO-2.

Response to Submission 651 (Lauren J. Knapp, October 12, 2011)

California

Traffic Hazard – Accidents along the exit ramps have been reduced now that FDOT has installed additional lighting at the 528/195 intersection. What controls are being considered to keep car accidents from damaging the support structures, causing possible derailments?

Flooding – The north side of my property floods with heavy rains, as the ditches running along the outside fence line can't handle the excessive water, which is in part the runoff from 528.

What plans are being made to ensure runoff from the tracks will not add to this issue?

As a taxpayer, I am concerned about the adverse affects the train will place on Brevard County, such as additional cost to maintain the tracks, without the benefit of a stop along the route to recoup the negative economical impact.

I would like to receive notification when the FEIS is available. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Rowland

From: bobludlum@aquadimensions.com
To: john.winkle@dot.gov
Subject: AAF DEIS Reply
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 6:47:16 PM
Attachments: [All Aboard Letter.docx](#)

Robert & Lisa Ludlum
775 NW Flagler Avenue, #301
Stuart, FL 34994

November 16, 2014

Mr. John Winkle
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE Room W38-311
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Winkle:

There are very serious issues omitted in the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) that should be addressed and alternate solutions considered to the All Aboard Florida (AAF) plans to run passenger rail service through the City of Stuart and surrounding communities that will not see any economic benefit of the 32 train crossings proposed.

I am a resident of Stuart, Florida, specifically the Harborage Yacht Club and Condominiums. The Harborage Yacht Club and Condominiums are situated on the east side of the Florida East Coast Railroad (RR) Tracks between two crossings 3,000 feet apart between Fern Street and Alice Avenue. Our condominium buildings are less than 80 feet from the tracks. We will be irreparably harmed by the All Aboard Florida (AAF) Intercity Passenger Rail Project if it is approved to run on the current tracks through this community as proposed.

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) prepared for AAF and believe it falls far short in its analysis of the true impacts to Martin County and City of Stuart residents, property owners and boaters.

I do not believe the DEIS adequately addresses our community's concerns with respect to crossing safety, noise pollution, train vibrations, emergency response times, quality of life, and disruption of marine navigation, by the change in operations of a bascule bridge almost 100 years old.

A summary of our issues that have been underestimated or inadequately addressed include,

Vehicle and Marine Traffic:

I believe the DEIS understates the navigational use of the St. Lucie River under the RR bridge.

Marine Traffic, exiting marinas, yacht builders, repair facilities, brokerages, and private docks were under counted. The Stuart RR Bridge was built in 1920's. The track segment through downtown Stuart is the only segment within the project limits that will remain single tracked. The more than threefold increase in train whistle noise pollution and vibrations will adversely impact neighborhoods on each side of downtown Stuart. I believe the effect of increased bridge openings on automobile traffic delays are not fully addressed in DEIS -- the Report only evaluated traffic at two intersections, SE Monterey Road and Colorado/SE Dixie Highway. Fern Street, Alice Avenue and other crossings to the south of the City were not evaluated. On a recent Saturday morning, a freight train stopped across both the Fern Street and Alice Avenue crossings blocked access for over an hour. Additionally the amount of time the crossings will be closed to automobile and marine traffic has been significantly underestimated due to the current and future amount of traffic, the amount of time the bridge must be closed prior to the trains arrival and the reduced speed the trains must achieve to navigate the sharp curve prior to or just after the bridge. It is apparent that replacing the bridge with a taller bridge system to reduce closings is not possible.

Emergency and Safety Personnel Response Times:

The Harborage has 129 two and three bedroom condos and three offices, with residents of all ages. Delays in securing emergency services as both entrances are closed for trains measurably undermine our emergency response times; there is no denying this fact, seconds matter in saving lives. This is not just a slim possibility due to a few minutes once or twice a day, this will be 32 times a day of the possibility of significantly reduced emergency response times.

Quality of Life:

The significant increase in train traffic will impede on ALL aspects of personal and business life in and around our homes and businesses. Our right to quiet enjoyment in our homes will be seriously violated by the increased train traffic limiting ingress and egress to our homes and by the train whistles and vibrations that will degrade our quality of life. While a firm believer in capitalism, there needs to be a very strong consideration to not only nature's environmental impact, but the same consideration to the impact of the individuals that live and work in that environment when a business is created or expanded in a community. There should be a serious consideration and corporate responsibility to the impact of the lives of the people in the environment that this private for profit business is proposing. An accurate evaluation to the impact we face has not been achieved.

Property Values

The life disruption, noise and safety concerns from the additional 32 passenger trains that are proposed to be using these tracks will make our property virtually unsaleable. There is a significant monetary impact that we will all endure. Additionally, this will create a substantial property value reduction to the surrounding community that is anywhere near the tracks. This should be accurately evaluated and disclosed in the DEIS.

There is zero economic benefit to our community. There is only detrimental impacts as outlined above. These are not extremist viewpoints. These are real issues and impacts that we face to our environment which we live in. There are alternate solutions. AAF should move to

and share the existing right of way that already offers passenger service to Orlando. Partner with or lease the CSX tracks to the west where there will be significantly reduced or no environmental impacts.

Alternate solutions must be considered if the overall environmental impacts are accurately assessed for not just the Harborage Condominiums, but the surrounding community as well.

Last, there is no justification for a Federal loan guarantee for a project that will ultimately degrade this community and the Treasure Coast. This must be done with private money and private guarantees with a corporate responsibility to the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert & Lisa Ludlum

Robert & Lisa Ludlum

--

Bob Ludlum, President

Aqua Dimensions Plumbing & Solar, Inc

1651 SW Macedo Blvd.

Port St. Lucie, FL 34984

772-344-8433 office

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Benjamin Franklin Plumbing

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From: [Susan Mehiel](#)
To: John.Winkle@DOT.Gov; AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF DEIS Response
Date: Monday, November 24, 2014 1:54:40 PM
Attachments: [EIS Mehiel response 11-24-14.docx](#)

(Also attached in Word Doc form)

John Winkle
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue room W38-311
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Winkle:

Response to the AAF DEIS

-
The following is my response to the All Aboard Florida Draft Environmental Impact Study released by the Federal Railroad Administration. In this response, I cover three critical areas that should have been more professionally and completely covered in the DEIS or were not included in the DEIS at all:

1. Analysis of Ridership Projections
2. The True Impact on CO2 Amounts
3. The Environmental Impact of HSR Sharing Freight Rails

As many before me, I found the DEIS sorely lacking in its analysis of the impact of HSR on many critical aspects of our local communities. I also found minimal detail in the analyses of important areas of the project or cavalier references to methodology or related studies with no supporting documents in the report or appendices.

Lastly, I must speak to this process that is conducted by an entity (the FRA) that is supposed to represent and protect the interests of the American people and taxpayers. If it were not for our local elected officials and the resources of some generous taxpayers and volunteers, this poor excuse for an impact study would have been released to the public with only 45 days to respond and would have had little or no professional, expert criticism of its content. Even 75 days was inadequate for a region where a large percentage of the residents and taxpayers are seasonal residents and were not even in the area for the first 60 days!

What is even more disturbing is that this is not the first DEIS prepared for or released by the FRA that addresses a proposed HSR rail project yet none of those other EIS analyses are referenced in this work. My research and the research of other residents has identified a number of DEIS's which address issues and negative impacts common to the AAF project – some were the cause of the RRIF loans not being granted. **It appears that the rail transportation experts at the US DOT and FRA review each DEIS in isolation and with no previous knowledge of negative impacts caused by similar projects.**

The FRA should be ashamed that it released this document under its official title while it is evidently clear that the document is written by and for the purposes of a corporation in order that it might use the taxpayer guaranteed dollars to build a devastatingly destructive rail project. When every rail expert and most municipal transportation employees recognize this document for what it is, it is unconscionable that the USDOT and FRA should be a party to this taxpayer abuse by a multibillion dollar hedge fund desperate to increase its asset in order to successfully flip it.

Susan Mehiel
131 Laurel Oak Lane
Vero Beach, FL 32963

***Response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed
All Aboard Florida Orlando to Miami Intercity Rail Project***

SECTION 1: DEIS Analysis of ridership projections

-
There is only one feature of HSR that signifies success and can be used to justify the inconvenience, disruption and environmental impacts of an express train or HSR system and that is **ridership**. If a system cannot attract enough riders, if there is not enough accepted benefit, then the cost to the taxpayers and the threat to health and safety and the environment cannot be justified.

Throughout the process of introducing the concept of AAF to the marketplace, AAF and Florida East Coast (FECI and FECR, sister companies to AAF) executives have refused to specify ridership projections or their formulas for developing projections and have refused to announce ticket pricing – the one main factor that drives all ridership projections. Once the major environmentally detrimental effects of AAF are known, it is impossible to weigh the costs to mitigate those effects if one does not know the true benefit of the service to the market place. Having reliable ridership projections are key to determining the extent of its benefit...its value and cost to the residents of the region.

In the DEIS, AAF divides ridership projections into two categories – Phase I, Short Distance Trips (stations in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach) and Phase II, Long Distance Trips (trips one way to/from from the SE Florida stations to/from Orlando.

A. Phase I – Ridership Projections:

With regard to Short Distance Trips (SDT), there is no specific mention in either the DEIS (3.5.2 Ridership) or the Louis Berger Group, Inc., (LBG) Ridership and Revenue Study (Appendix) of the existing inter-city Tri-Rail Service operating between Miami and West Palm Beach and its impact on SDT ridership.

Tri-Rail has been in operation for 25 years with 22 stations between MIA and WPB and in 2013 Tri-Rail reported 4.3 million riders (and an operating deficit of approximately \$87 million in 2012^{[\[i\]](#)}). The weekday rate to travel the length of the line averages \$3 (including regular discounts), while AAF documents show an anticipated ticket price for the same trip to be \$23.77 for a coach seat.

After 3 years the projected ticket price will be \$25.23.^[ii] Charging eight times the amount of the existing rail service would make it difficult to capture a substantial quantity of existing Tri Rail passengers to accomplish the benchmark of 2.2 million annual passengers projected by LBG three years into the project.

The omission of any references to the impact that Tri-Rail would have on AAF as it builds ridership of its Phase I route casts doubt on the accuracy of its SDT ridership projections, ridership projections for the entire project and the AAF financial projections.

Experts in passenger rail suggest that in a comparison of costs to build and operate HSR versus bus systems, buses are a great savings. In addition, bus service does not take as much CO2 producing activities to operate and build as does building and operating HSR. To that point, an article in the Sun Sentinel, Sept. 1, 2012 stated:

Persuading commuters to leave their cars at homes has always been a challenge for Tri-Rail. But it's not the only one. Express buses now run a faster, more direct route to downtown Miami than the train, and that competition has raised the stakes. New fees to switch from Tri-Rail to Metrorail, along with the growing popularity of the I-95 express buses, have undermined the commuter train's ridership, especially on the southern half of the route.

The busiest of Tri-Rail's 17 stations is now [Boca Raton](#). Ridership at the Boca station jumped by an average of 447 passengers a day in the past five years. Tri-Rail's Metrorail transfer station in Miami, long the dominant station in numbers of riders, slipped to No. 2.^[iii]

The price of a ticket on the Express Commuter Bus service from Broward County to the downtown Miami employment centers is \$2.35 with discounts for monthly passes. AAF does not have a Boca station which appears to be a relatively large mass transportation market. While Tri-Rail has difficulty getting motorists to leave their cars, AAF will have to do so in larger numbers since competing with a growing bus ridership and Tri-Rail will be difficult.

The omission by AAF and LGB of the impact of a popular commuter bus service serving the Phase I market calls into question the credibility of their ridership projections. Either AAF will compete heavily with Tri-Rail and commuter bus services or they will have to develop an entirely new ridership market out of whole cloth.

B. Phase II Ridership Projections:

There are two HSR systems in the world that actually make a profit – one in Japan and the other in France. Acela is the US system most like HSR operating express trains between Boston, New York City and Washington, DC. (Acela operates at a deficit when you include all overhead and capital expenses required to operate a like system.)

Rail experts have outlined the most important characteristics found in successful high speed or express rail markets. These include:

1. Densely populated cities along the route with the heaviest concentration of population

near the stations.

While the Los Angeles metro area has the highest U.S. population density, it is dwarfed by European and Asian cities. The least dense major city in Europe, Berlin, has about twice the population density of New York City. Since HSR requires high urban densities, particularly those concentrated close to major rail stations, extending HSR to places without the ability or desire to encourage high densities is unlikely to be successful. [\[iv\]](#)

The population densities of Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, particularly close to the stations sites, do not display the numbers required to support HSR. The towns and cities along the remainder of the route will never have the population density, nor do they desire the density, to support HSR.

The safety concerns and negative environmental and financial impacts on the municipalities along the Phase II route, far outweigh any positives brought to the region by AAF.

2. The existence of highly used passenger rail before the HSR is developed

Passenger rail only exists in the Phase I portion of AAF. There is no existing demand in the Phase II area except in parts of Orlando. All passenger rail in both phases require large taxpayer subsidies.

3. A good system of public transportation “feeders” already in place, i.e., buses, taxis, light rail, etc.

In Tokyo and Paris, passengers can arrive at stations and travel by heavy-rail or commuter-rail to nearly all the destinations in the urban area. A short taxi ride or bus ride may be necessary to reach one’s final destination. In the U.S. very few metro areas are sufficiently dense or have the extensive transit systems necessary to make this possible. [\[v\]](#)

With the exception of Miami and the Orlando Airport stations, there are no extensive feeder systems or population densities close to the proposed stations. For future development of the rail system, the municipalities along the route that would be natural for locating future stations, also do not have population densities required nor do they have feeder systems in place.

Based on the factors unique to successful HSR systems, AAF is destined to not gain enough ridership to be financially successful and will not outweigh the costs in health, safety and environmental destruction it will impose on the region.

Baruch Feigenbaum said it best when he wrote in the article footnoted below:

...the U.S. is a uniquely auto-centric country: it has a much lower gas tax, cheaper gas prices and a much more extensive free highway network than comparable countries around the world. The U.S. interstate network remains the only large-scale toll-free network in the world for both cars and trucks. As a result, car travel is deeply embedded in the American economy, culture and geography. Simply building new high-speed rail lines will do nothing to change that.

C. Projecting AAF Ridership Based on an Existing US Model:

-

The one rail system in the US that most closely resembles the HSR of Asia and Europe is Amtrak's Acela express trains of the northeast. Ironically, of Acela's two main routes – Boston to NYC and NYC to Washington, DC – the NYC to DC route is nearly equal in distance to AAF's route from MIA to MCO. In the aggregate, the 2013 estimated populations for the Metropolitan Statistical Area's Acela serves total 30,584,300^[vi] and its ridership estimate for that same year is 3.3 million or about 11% ridership of the market base.

ACELA AND AFF MSA 2013 POPULATION ESTIMATES

-

Boston, MA (NH)	4,684,300	Miami (FTL, WPB)
5,828,000		
NYC Metro (NJ, PA)	19,950,000	Orlando
2,268,000		
Washington, DC (VA)	5,950,000	

The total MSA base for AAF in 2013 was estimated at 8,096,000. If AAF were to gain the same market share based on the existing population in its Florida market, it would anticipate 890,560 passengers per year for its Long Distance Trips (LDT). To accept this estimate, one would also have to assume that AAF would have to have established a ridership base over a multi-year period of operations.

As specific Acela ridership figures are not available by route, a more conservative comparison would be to assume the ridership is divided evenly between the routes (north of and south of NYC) and compare AAF to the NYC – DC route. With a population base of 25.9 million and a ridership of 1.65 million, the relative market draw would be 6.5%. Comparing AAF to the southern route of Acela, one can predict a ridership estimate of 526,240 passengers.

AAF executives contend that ridership will be augmented by the vast number of tourists visiting south Florida. The tourist markets of Boston, NYC, Philadelphia and DC would equal or surpass the tourist statistics of the AAF Florida destinations. New York and Washington are in the top 10 cities for international travelers and spending while only Miami is included in the list. New York metro airports are far busier than the Miami airport for domestic and international travel.

The LBG study (Appendix report, p 4) done for AAF projects a three-case scenario average of 2,208,985 Short Distance riders after the first three years of operation. With an MSA estimate of 5,828,000 (including the populations of greater Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach) that would mean **37.5% of the entire population would ride the trains annually**. The tourist market would not factor into the SDTs as heavily because Orlando is not a destination of the SDT's.

The LBG Study projects a three-case scenario average of 1,987,566 Long Distance riders after the first three years of operation. Based on the comparison of Acela ridership to MSA population, **nearly 24% of the combined MSA populations of the south Florida and Orlando markets would be riding the train.** Despite the acceptance that tourists will also be riding the AAF trains, the south Florida markets have been shown to have none of the other characteristics including dense populations and feeder systems to facilitate ridership growth.

The bottom line on the AAF/LBG ridership projections: “Rail experts estimate that a U.S. HSR line would need ridership of between 6 million and 9 million people per year to break even. Compare that to the high-speed Acela service, which despite operating in the busy Northeast Corridor averages only 3.4 million passengers per year.”^[vii]

It is impossible to believe that AAF, despite the number of tourists to the south Florida market, will double and triple the market penetration percentages of Acela. The population density, existing demand and feeder systems do not exist in the markets. Existing Tri-Rail and Express Bus systems are handling demand for commuter transportation and Short Distance Trips and will suppress ridership development for Phase I of AAF.

Conclusion: AAF will never meet the LBG projections and hence will not meet any of the beneficial features projected including CO2 reduction, road congestion reduction, financial success – job and business growth to the magnitude projected.

SECTION 2: The True Impact on CO2 Amounts:

-

A. Faulty Projections and the Impact on CO2

Related to faulty ridership projections by AAF are the consequential faulty predictions of the benefits of all of these riders boarding the trains. For months, AAF executives and the AAF website claimed that the trains’ ridership resulted in 3 million less cars on the roads annually. This is an interesting number since the LBG report on ridership had been completed long before and did not reach a projection of even half of that number by 2030.

In the DEIS, 3.5.2 Ridership Projections, and the LBG Report (Appendix), after 3 years of operation, AAF will account for 1,165,942 cars removed from the roads. Based on their assumption that each car represents 2.38 passengers, they predict nearly 2.8 million people will be leaving their cars and riding the trains annually. Considering the above review of their ridership projections, this benchmark will never be met. Again, **the competition of SDT alternatives and lack of population density make their car projections impossible to reach and any benefit to CO2 levels reduced by fewer cars a fallacy.**

The CO2 generated to get people to the south county stations and to build parking garages to hold passengers’ cars will far outweigh any CO2 reduction created by the trains. Because of low population densities close in to stations, AAF will have to draw a large percentage of its ridership from persons living/working farther from the stations. Riders will have to take cabs, buses or other vehicles to get to the stations burning fossil fuels in the process. The construction of parking

garages near stations to house passenger cars will also generate large amounts of **CO2**. **In the end, AAF will create far more CO2 and greenhouse gases than it will ever be responsible for that will never be offset by the trains taking the passengers to MCO** rather than the passengers driving their cars.

B. Debunking any Environmental Benefits of AAF

Ironically, in 2004 an Environmental Impact Study was conducted for the Florida High Speed Rail Authority which came to a totally different conclusion about the environmental benefits of HSR than did the AAF study. The Florida Authority planned to develop HSR for a number of areas in the state including the Miami to Orlando corridor. They developed the Orlando – Miami Planning Study which found that the FEC corridor was the least attractive route for four factors including Travel Time, Capital Costs, Ridership – Revenue and Environment.

As Wendell Cox reports in his study, HSR – The Wrong Road for America, ...*“The EIS also estimated that either the electric or turbine trains would produce more nitrogen oxide pollution than the cars they would take off the road. The gas turbine trains in the preferred alternative would also produce more volatile organic compounds than the cars they would take off the road.”*

In the end, the Florida HSR Authority EIS concluded, “The EIS concluded **that “the environmentally preferred alternative is the No Build Alternative”** because it **“would result in less direct and indirect impact to the environment.”** ^[viii]

Conclusion: It is a known industry fact that the construction and operation of HSR and all of the other accompanying facilities and commercial properties results in an array of emitted pollutants far greater than the reduction of emissions from taking cars off the road. There are no environmental benefits to HSR in this market.

SECTION 3: The Environmental Impact of HSR Sharing Freight Rails

-
In a more timely reference to rail versus environmental benefit, we look to the Wall Street Journal, Nov. 14, 2014 and the column, “Mary Landrieu’s Keystone Lifeline” which reports that “One irony is that rail poses a greater environmental risk and so-called carbon footprint than the 1,200-mile underground pipeline. According to a State Department report this year, distributing the oil via train directly to the Gulf of Mexico would increase greenhouse gas emissions by 41.8%.” ^[ix]

Although this article is about the comparison of oil transported by rail rather than via the Keystone Pipeline and not passenger rail, it does bring to the fore one of the most glaring deficiencies of the AAF DEIS – the fact that the study does not take into account the environmental impact of the entire FEC corridor post AAF development – **the more than doubling of freight on the same rails as the addition of the HSR’s 32 trains per day equaling over 54 trains per day.**

Under NEPA, the FRA is required to consider the indirect and secondary impacts and the cumulative

impacts in combination with those of other reasonably foreseeable actions when conducting the EIS. (NEPA Reg., 40 F.F.R.; FRA NEPA Procedures, 64 Fed. Reg.; USDOT NEPA Procedures, Attachment 2) All of AAF and FEC's websites and executives have been quoted for over 3 years regarding the projected increases in freight rail on the FEC line. State and regional intermodal planning documents including [CARGO 2040](#) ^[x] and nearly every industry publication has discussed the doubling and more of freight coming out of the Miami and Ft. Lauderdale ports once the Panama Canal is widened.

The FRA's DEIS does not take into account the impact on every aspect of the route's environment with the doubling of freight combined with the addition of a totally new rail system – AAF.

At least 3 freight rail companies believe strongly that trains running 110 mph should not share tracks with freight. Union Pacific is fighting this issue in the northwest where HSR is being proposed to operate from Eugene to Portland, Oregon. As the [Portland Business Journal](#) reports, "UP has raised safety and liability concerns about expanding passenger rail and stated publicly that it will never allow speeds above 79 miles per hour on its tracks..."

"If (high-speed rail) is something that the public wants to pursue, we would coach you to find a different right of way," Union Pacific spokesman [Brock Nelson](#) said at a December public meeting.

At the same time, CSX in upstate NY is ironically fighting the prospect of HSR on its freight line in another FRA draft EIS. "The freight railroad opposed alternatives that would use its property to boost top train speeds from the current 79 mph to either 90 mph or 110 mph. It favored an alternative that would see top speeds reach 125 mph, but only because it would **require an entirely new rail line separate from CSX's existing corridor.**" (Albany, [Times Union](#))

This has been an issue and growing concern for years. In the mid-90's it was reported, "Amtrak wants to upgrade existing U.S. tracks so they can be used as high-speed passenger corridors. Conrail, the principal freight hauler in the Northeast, says high-speed trains are too dangerous to run on its tracks... 'we ask that people understand **the serious danger and service degradation** resulting from (the) combination of freight and passenger services with such disparate speed on the same or adjacent track,' the Philadelphia railroad said in its policy statement." ([The Philadelphia Inquirer](#))

The concept of sharing tracks is not only dangerous with the threat of HSR/freight collisions and derailments but also with the potential of freight accidents resulting in hazardous waste catastrophes. The Florida East Coast freight line is currently carrying liquid asphalt and, if not already, it will be carrying liquid propane and ethanol among other hazardous materials. Imagine a derailment or other accident involving a freight train carrying one of these materials minutes before an AAF train reaches the scene careening into the accident at 110 mph.

The extent of industry concern is only magnified by the former National Transportation Safety Board Chairman, Deborah Hersman, who spoke about the problem of rail tankers. The [Associated Press](#) reports the cars are too easily punctured or ruptured, even in low-speed accidents. Their flammable contents are then spilled, fouling the environment and often igniting. "There is a very high risk here that hasn't been addressed ... We don't need a higher body count before they move forward,"

Hersman said. However, AP reports that it's likely to be at least months, and possibly years, before new government standards go into effect.

Conclusion: It is unconscionable that the FRA would release a DEIS that doesn't address the impact of HSR sharing freight rail. The DEIS should be rewritten to include a detailed analysis of this aspect of the project.

[i] South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, Comprehensive Financial Report, 6/30/2012

[ii] Palm Beach Post, 6/20/2014

[iii] Sun Sentinel, Tri-Rail Ridership Shifts; September, 2012

[iv] High Speed Rail in Asia and Europe, Baruch Feigenbaum; Reason Foundation; May, 2013

[v] “

[vi] The MSA rank by population as of July 1, 2013, as estimated by the [United States Census Bureau](#)

[vii] Reason Foundation, High Speed Rail in Europe and Asia: Lessons for the United States, May, 2013

[viii] High Speed Rail, The Wrong Road for America, Wendell Cox, Oct. 2008

[ix] Wall Street Journal, “Mary Landrieu’s Keystone Lifeline”, Nov. 14, 2014

[x] CARGO 2040, Southeast Florida Regional Freight Plan, 2013 and 2014 updates

From: [Gerald Holm](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF DEIS
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2014 1:01:48 PM
Attachments: [AAF comments.pdf](#)

Attached please find my comments on the All Aboard Florida DEIS.
Gerry Holm

From: [W. E. Ted Guy](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF DEIS
Date: Tuesday, October 21, 2014 4:40:07 PM
Attachments: [AAF DEIS COMMENTS.pdf](#)

Dear Mr. Winkle:

My first comments are attached. Please disregard the spurious URL about the Cape Sable canals that crept in; I could not delete it.

W.E. "Ted" Guy, Jr.
643 SW Fuge Rd
Stuart, FL 34997
(772) 287-4106 (home)
(772) 485-1866 (cell/car)
guywe2@gmail.com

From: [Leslie Olson](#)
To: [AAF_Comments@vfb.com](#); "[john.winkle@dot.gov](#)"
Cc: [Mark Satterlee](#); "[KoriBenton@City-FtPierce.Com](#)"; [Robert Bentkofsky](#); [Daniel McIntyre](#)
Subject: AAF DEIS: Cultural Resources pertaining to St. Lucie County
Date: Friday, September 26, 2014 1:44:46 PM

Mr. John Winkle
Federal Rail Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue
SE Room W38-311
Washington, D.C. 20590

Via E-Mail

September 26, 2014

Dear Mr. Winkle:

Acting as the St. Lucie County Historic Preservation Officer, I have reviewed Sections 4.4.5, 5.4.5 and 7.2.12 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for All Aboard Florida as it relates to cultural (historical and archeological) resources.

Table 4.4.5-1 on page 4-125 lists me as the Certified Local Government contact and states that the consultant contacted me regarding Potential Locally Designated Cultural Resources, and that there was "No Response" from this office. I have no record of any written or verbal correspondence from the AAF consultant on this project requesting information or comment. Please have the consultant provide the written request to this office as soon as possible. A review of Tables 4.4.5-9, 4.4.5-10, 4.4.5-11, 4.4.5-12, 4.4.5-13, and 4.4.5-14, identifying Potential Locally Designated Cultural Resources, shows a significant deficiency of identified unincorporated St. Lucie County historical and archeological resources within the project area. The FEC Corridor as it passes through unincorporated St. Lucie County is encompassed by a number of identified archeological preservation zones, sites, and historic resources. As these sites are missing from the DEIS, the Section 106 review, summarized in Section 5.4.5.2, cannot be considered complete and ready for SHPO review.

St. Lucie County staff will create a series on maps listing all potential locally designated cultural resources to the consultant after receiving the request from the consultant.

In its current form, the DEIS is incomplete.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Leslie Olson, AICP
Planning Manager
Planning and Development Services
St. Lucie County

(772)462-1589
olsonl@stlucieco.org

Please Note: Florida has very broad public records laws. Most written communications to or from County officials regarding County business are public records available to the public and media upon request. It is the policy of St. Lucie County that all County records shall be open for personal inspection, examination and / or copying. Your e-mail communications will be subject to public disclosure unless an exemption applies to the communication. If you received this email in error, please notify the sender by reply e-mail and delete all materials from all computers.

From: [Leslie Olson](#)
To: [AAF_Comments@vfb.com](#); "[john.winkle@dot.gov](#)"
Cc: [Mark Satterlee](#); "[KoriBenton@City-FtPierce.Com](#)"; [Robert Bentkofsky](#); [Daniel McIntyre](#)
Subject: AAF DEIS: Cultural Resources pertaining to St. Lucie County
Date: Friday, September 26, 2014 1:44:46 PM

Mr. John Winkle
Federal Rail Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue
SE Room W38-311
Washington, D.C. 20590

Via E-Mail

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From: [Geraldine Genco](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF disingenuous
Date: Saturday, October 25, 2014 2:05:48 PM
Attachments: [PastedGraphic-6.pdf](#)
[ATT00001.htm](#)

My husband, our community (Village of Tequesta) and I strongly oppose the currently proposed All Aboard Florida (AAF) FEC route. AAF's name is disingenuous, it is not for all communities, there is no intent to provide local rail service, only limited express intercity service. Many are unaware of this fact, confusing it with long proposed local Amtrak routes and have thus supported it.

<!--[if !supportLists]--> <!--[endif]-->AAF's route is extremely detrimental to the communities north of West Palm Beach, overall its route was ranked 3rd of 4 alternatives, it completely bifurcates communities along its northern route from necessary medical, public safety services and ocean access.

<!--[if !supportLists]--> <!--[endif]-->It duplicates services already provided by Amtrak that the State of Florida has financially invested.

<!--[if !supportLists]--> <!--[endif]-->AAF's route has not received the determination that it is the least environmentally damaging alternative.

It is really about the provision of upgraded rails for intermodal freight transport, in closed door meetings Mr. Reininger AAF's President stated that some crossings will be closed for "no more than 30 minutes an hour." Intermodal rail includes nonmetallic minerals, chemicals and allied products, coal, and miscellaneous mixed shipments, trafficking through and adjacent to residential housing.

AAF's express passenger rail service is in competition with Amtrak and the planned increased intermodal freight transport in tandem with the proposed passenger train will negatively impact those northern route residential communities and the small business they access. Many small residential communities will be forced to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to upgrade rail crossings to the financial enrichment of AAF, a privately owned corporation. The proposed route for FEC endorses the wrong alternative for provision of service to Florida's residents.

From: [Suzi Robinett](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Disruption by multiple trains in Stuart
Date: Thursday, September 25, 2014 5:39:12 PM

Sirs,

My husband and I have been residents in Stuart for over 12 years. We were drawn here by the small town character, abundant social and educational activities, nearby shopping, doctors and medical facilities, libraries, parks and beaches, and all the other pleasures available here.

We are now learning that access to all the above will be jeopardized by the increase of railroad traffic through the very middle of our community,

We reside in Circle Bay Yacht Club and Condominiums, located on the south fork of the St Lucie River just north of the old Palm City bridge.

We are west of US Hwy 1 and nearly everything we do requires that we cross the railroad tracks. The intended plan to run 40 plus trains through Stuart on any given day will surely mean a whole lot of wasted time and gas and (since we are retired and over 70 years old) a loss of too much of the precious life we have left!

From 6 am, when we cross the tracks to exercise at the YMCA, at noon to lunch in downtown Stuart, to visiting the eye doctor or foot doctor or the library or going to the Elliott Museum or to Stuart Beach or Florida Oceanographic to volunteer, we will encounter delays and frustration. Getting around Confusion Circle in downtown Stuart is already a challenge. I can only imagine what tripling the number of trains will do to increase that ordeal.

Historic downtown Stuart has evolved into a delightful destination for shopping, dining, boating, concerts, etc. Imagine all of that with 2 trains charging through every hour. A slice of Luna's pizza or a cup of Stuart Coffee or breakfast under the awning at the Ocoola Cafe on Flagler Street will no longer be a very pleasant experience.

Stuart is only one of many small communities that will suffer, wither and disappear if this travesty of greed is allowed to proceed. Please take into consideration the quality of life of thousands of Floridians who presently live within 2 miles of the railroad tracks. There has to be another solution to carrying freight and passengers to Orlando, a solution that will not destroy what so many have worked so hard to achieve.

Suzanne Robinett
1950 SW Palm City Rd. 12-301
Stuart, FL 34994

From: [Kelly Phelan](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Cc: [Mark Satterlee](#); [Leslie Olson](#); [Beverly Austin](#)
Subject: AAF- Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Date: Tuesday, November 25, 2014 4:58:32 PM
Attachments: [AAF Letter.pdf](#)

Mr. Winkle,

Please see the attached letter from the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners. The original has been sent to you via U.S. Mail. I hope you have a great holiday weekend!

Kindest Regards,

Kelly Phelan
St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners
Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Phone: 772-462-1156
Fax: 772-462-2131
phelank@stlucieco.org



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From: SUNWRENT@aol.com
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com; andrew.w.phillips@usace.army.mil
Cc: john_wrublek@fws.gov; charles_kelso@fws.gov; elizabeth_landrum@fws.gov; brian_powell@fws.gov; bpowell@ircgov.com
Subject: AAF EIS Comment
Date: Wednesday, November 5, 2014 8:50:37 PM

A serious oversight in the All Aboard Florida Environmental Impact Study is the dramatic impact the construction of an additional track and the huge increase in number of trains will have on the North Sebastian Conservation Area in Indian River County. This conservation area directly abuts the railroad track for approximately one (1) mile in Indian River County.

The North Sebastian Conservation Area was specifically set up for habitat for Florida Scrub-Jays, Gopher Tortoises and the protection of the endangered scrub habitat. Also there are various wetlands there (some of the wetlands are very close to the railroad track and many species visit it including Wood Storks, Roseate Spoonbills, Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, Egrets, etc., etc.).

The population of Scrub-Jays in the North Sebastian Conservation area **increased by 55% from July 31, 2013 to July 31, 2014**, far above the State average, making it extremely important.

I have been monitoring Florida Scrub-Jays in Indian River County for 5-1/2 years and am very familiar with their presence and behavior. The Scrub-Jays at North Sebastian Conservation Area **regularly cross the railroad tracks** to gather food from vacant lots and grassy areas (particularly during nesting season to gather worms and insects in the grassy areas needed to feed their babies). And they actually forage right along the tracks. I have pictures documenting this behavior if you need it for your records. This will obviously result in increased fatalities of Scrub-Jays with increased numbers of high-speed trains. Also, many other birds and animals, including Gopher Tortoises, cross the tracks going to and from this Conservation Area which will result in more deaths.

Additionally, I have observed, during acorn-gathering season that the Scrub-Jays collect acorns right along the railroad track. When a train horn sounds they get scared and fly away. With many trains going by the Scrub-Jays will be losing a large portion of their essential food -- acorns from Scrub-Oaks.

In addition to the North Sebastian Conservation Area, Scrub-Jays are known to live right along the railroad tracks on private properties in Micco, FL (Brevard County). Valkaria also has scrub habitat right along the railroad tracks. It's also possible the Scrub-Jays that live on the Vero Beach Airport property adjacent to the railroad tracks will be affected.

So, it is totally incorrect in the Environmental Impact Statement and the Army Corps of Engineers permit application that Scrub-Jays will not be affected on the North-South route. There will be a dramatic effect on them, and we just cannot allow a conservation area that has been very successful in increasing numbers of Scrub-Jays to have increased kill by trains, interrupted nesting due to construction of new tracks and high-speed trains, and a good portion of the Scrub-Jays food source unavailable to them.

Sincerely,

Jane Schnee
1022 Foster Rd. - Apt. A
Sebastian, FL 32958
(772)589-3201

From: [Ken Scott](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF EIS Response
Date: Wednesday, November 26, 2014 10:03:15 AM

John Winkle
FRA Environmental Specialist
Office of Railroad Policy and Development
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, D.C. 20590
(202) 493-6067
john.winkle@dot.gov

This letter is in response to the EIS for AAF's proposal for high speed rail. I am **opposed** to this project and if allowed it will negatively change the quality of life for the majority of residents of the Treasure Coast.

I am initially concerned that the EIS was prepared by a consultant hired by AAF, using AAF parameters and analysis. It's natural to assume that one can get the answers they want if they provide you the data to evaluate.

AAF states that its purpose is to provide reliable and convenient passenger rail transportation between Orlando and Miami by maximizing the use of existing transportation corridors. We already have an existing rail line for this purpose (AMTRAK). There are many other ways to accomplish this without the negative impacts that AAF's proposal causes. AAF is owned by a venture capital group that is only interested in increasing the value of their asset without regard to the harm that it will cause to the residents of Florida. Although one can argue that public transportation is needed, it is not needed at all costs. The cost in loss of quality of life and property values to the surrounding communities will be too great. This is only a good deal for AAF.

Route Alternatives: The evaluation of route alternatives only concerns AAF's determining factors. Their evaluation only determines that their proposed route is best for them. 3.2.1 "Any alternative requiring extensive acquisitions would have substantial cost, delay and risk which affect the determination of whether an alternative is **commercially** viable." Whether or not a project is commercially viable should not be a determining factor on whether this project should move forward. The entire Treasure coast should not be made to suffer to provide for a profitable enterprise for a private company. Moving this project to the I-95, Turnpike or CSX route alternatives would eliminate the negative impact of increased rail traffic at over 100 at grade crossings for the proposed AAF route. The FEC corridor was originally developed along the east coast of Florida when no other viable transportation for freight was available. It was never intended for the number of trips that AAF is proposing. Just because it's there shouldn't mean that AAF can do whatever it wants without regard to the residents it will negatively impact. I'm sure that not even Henry Flagler would think this is a good idea.

At Grade Crossings: The number of at grade crossings (159 in the N-S Corridor) is inconsistent with typical high speed rail. This high number of at grade crossings, coupled with the number of trips that AAF is proposing (both freight and passenger) will cause significant complications and dangers for those residents living on the wrong side of the tracks. Increased wait time for emergency service will be unavoidable and will assuredly result in loss of life. The increase in speed of trains traveling through this corridor will make traveling across the tracks a daily problematic experience. It is conceivable with the increase in freight traffic and the addition of passenger that a number of major crossings could be closed for more than 25% of each hour. This will create access problems for businesses east of the tracks resulting in a negative economic impact. This will result in increased traffic congestion as traffic backs up waiting to be able to cross the tracks. There are numerous locations that this will result in unsafe traffic conditions. It is stated in the EIS that the Seaway Drive crossing in Fort Pierce will have one of the longest wait times of any crossing. How can this not negatively impact traffic flow as traffic backs up on US1 waiting to travel east on Seaway Drive? The residents of St. Lucie Village will conceivably be parked on Old Dixie

Highway as the increased right of way will leave not even room for one car to be clear of traffic. These are only a couple of examples of problematic intersections, I'm sure that there are many more.

The current accident data in the EIS is based on freight traffic traveling at 30 mph or less. These numbers will certainly increase when speeds increase to 75-100 mph. This kind of traffic speeding through small congested downtown areas should not be allowed. It is also likely to cause damage through increased vibration to Historic structures located near the tracks in both downtown Fort Pierce and Stuart.

Navigation: The St. Lucie Bridge might well be permanently closed if this project moves forward. With the increase in traffic from passenger and freight this crossing will be virtually impassable to boat traffic. The congestion this will create for boaters that must use this crossing will undoubtedly cause frustration and accidents. It will also have a negative economic impact with resulting decrease in property values for those property owners that use this waterway for ocean access.

Conclusion: AAF is a bad deal for the residents of the Treasure Coast.

Sincerely,

Ken Scott

Fort Pierce, FL

From: [Lydia Schulman](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vrb.com
Subject: AAF EIS
Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 11:08:03 PM

Dear Mr. Winkle,

There are so many unwarranted assumptions and overlooked community concerns in the recently released EIS on AAF that I hardly know where to begin. I'll limit myself to two points:

Re: Public health and safety. "Positive train control" may reduce train collisions, but what's going to happen to the children, elderly, and pets who inevitably will stray onto unprotected tracks with 110-mile trains speeding through? In my town, Vero Beach, most of the current tracks are unprotected--no fences--and there are no plans to provide complete coverage of the tracks. Besides, erecting fences along the totality of the tracks would make our beautiful town look like a prison.

And what's going to happen when emergency vehicles get blocked by trains which will close crossings an (under-)estimated 1.7-2.8 minutes several times an hour (counting all passenger trains and expanded freight traffic)? Elderly people with medical emergencies will be DEAD ON ARRIVAL at the hospital.

When the existing tracks were built there was no great concentration of homes and businesses near the tracks. Decades later when I-95 was built, it was built way to the west of the towns along Florida's east coast for good reasons. AAF is now proposing to run multiple, frequent, high-speed trains RIGHT THROUGH THE CENTERS OF OUR TOWNS.

Re: property values and commerce. In contrast to the claims in the EIS, local realtors are predicting significant declines in the values of properties--homes and businesses--near the expanded tracks. Please listen to their estimates, not the projections of "experts" miles away. This will most hurt the lower-income and minority residents who lives in those homes, businesses who employ a majority of the communities' working people, and, naturally, the municipalities, whose tax revenues will decline.

In other words, the proposed high-speed rail plan may look good to investors safely crunching numbers in their Manhattan offices, but it will be a disaster for retired people, poor people, local businesses, and everyone else who actually *lives* along the AAF tracks.

Sincerely, Lydia Schulman
a concerned citizen of Vero Beach

From: [Dutlinger, G. Buster](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Cc: buster32926@gmail.com
Subject: AAF Engineering short fall concerns
Date: Thursday, November 13, 2014 7:10:40 PM

My name is Granvil M Dutlinger I live at 5300 Palmetto Ave Cocoa Fla 32926.

My home is one of the few homes who lays directly connected to the south side SR528 right of way where AAF wants to run their trains. My Largest concern about the AAF project is how the noise and Vibrations of trains going over 100 MPH less than a 100 feet from my home will affect the foundation of my home and my in ground pool. There Has Not be enough engineering and/or studies done in the EIS to show the residents Palmetto Ave that their homes will not be adversely affected in any way by AAF project.

Unlikely elsewhere along AAF route where there has been preexisting tracks with trains running on a daily basis for 100 years. The surrounding land has had time to adjust to the Vibrations and settle in prior to any homes or buildings being built in the area of the tracks.

Our properties and homes have never exposed to anything close to the magnitude that AAF trains will subject them to every day. So what happens homes when these trains go roaring by 32 times a day. Also their last train of the night leaving the Miami station will be passing by my home around midnight every night of the week 365 day a year.

There are web sites out there that show a comparison of a train passing by to a 4.0 to 4.9 earthquake. So think about what just a 4.0 vibrations will do to our homes when exposed 32 times a day every day.

What are their plans for the drainage? Because all of our properties along Palmetto Ave and SR528 drain directly where the want to put the tracks? Putting in a drain pond a mile away will not stop them from flooding out my yard when it rains.

I have many more concerns and questions about the AAF project but the Vibrations are the most pressing ones that need to be satisfied before this project is allowed to proceed.

Granvil Dutlinger | Product Sourcing | PIRTEK USA
Ph: 321.504.4422 | FAX: 321.504.6009
501 Haverty Ct., Rockledge, FL 32955
Gdutlinger@pirtekusa.com | www.pirtekusa.com

From: [Norman Ridgely](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Enviromental report
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 1:03:57 PM

The environmental report required does not meet the required standard as it does not address alternative routes, impacts on the community of INDIAN RIVER COUNTY from the view of safety, noise, air pollution, vibration damage, water pollution, wildlife endangerment, and a negative impact definitely on real estate values. It does not even mention certain cities in the county; does AAF not consider that they even exist.

Furthermore, the report is definitely biased as they selected the company that prepared it, and they paid for it. In both business and government, that is not a policy that is condoned. An example of that is the requirement of FDIC lenders having to order appraisals thru an "appraisal management company".

I expect nothing less then a new report to be prepared by an UNBIASED company selected not by AAF.

Norman C. Ridgely
PO Box 651068
Vero Beach, FL 32965

772-532-4265

From: [Mark Vantzelfde](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Environment Impact Statement
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 8:53:51 AM

I do not feel that the EIS for the AAF proposal adequately addresses the impact on our neighborhood of the increases in noise and traffic congestion that the project will incur.

Twice hourly, around the clock trains passing across the two key intersections near our neighborhood with the associated horn blasts and noise from the rumbling of the trains will significantly impact the level of noise in our neighborhood. Sleeping at night will become almost impossible. We are already negatively impacted by the noise of the existing train traffic. A 6 fold increase in the number of trains will be nearly unbearable.

In addition, we already suffer traffic delays and tie-ups crossing the tracks from east to west in order to gain access to the local hospital, doctors, and shopping. The crossings will be shut down an additional 32 times per day, causing a significant increase in the risk to our health and safety due to the additional traffic delays for public safety to our neighborhood from the other side of the tracks. Also, the additional crossing delays will cause us to suffer additional pollution from idling vehicles waiting 32 more times for the trains to pass.

I believe the EIS needs to better estimate and assess the impact of the increase in noise on our neighborhood, with real-life measurements and evaluations versus known standards for acceptable noise in a suburban setting.

I also believe the EIS needs to better estimate and assess the impact of increased traffic delays crossing the tracks due to additional trains on public safety access to and from our neighborhood.

Finally, I also believe the EIS needs to better estimate and assess the impact on air quality in our neighborhood due to the increase in idling vehicles waiting to cross the tracks.

Mark Vantzelfde
16630 Hidden Cove Dr
Jupiter, FL 33477

From: [Chuck Barrowclough](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Environmental Impact Statement Comments
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 2:57:40 AM
Attachments: [AAF Comments 1.pdf](#)
[AAF Comments 2.pdf](#)

Mr. Winkle: Please find attached our comments on the Draft AAF Environmental Impact Statement.

Best,
Chuck

Charles W. Barrowclough, Executive Director
Treasured Lands Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 2596
Stuart, Florida 34995
Office: 772-647-9076
Cell: 772-475-5346
www.treasuredlands.org
www.barleybarber.org

From: [Andrew Jones](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com; john.winkle@dot.gov
Subject: AAF has not demonstrated a proven ability to repay the loan
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 10:44:56 PM

Dear Barbara Barr/John Winkle

The purpose of this letter is to ask that the RRIF loan to All Aboard Florida not be approved because the information in the EIS is flawed to the point where your loan committee clearly can't make an informed decision as to the repayment ability of the project. The purpose of the loan offering is to get repaid and the EIS clearly does not demonstrate that repayment ability. The FRA has a fiduciary duty to the taxpayer to make sure that the loans will be repaid and your loan committee members certainly do not want to approve a project that some are calling "the next Solyndra" but even bigger. The FRA has never made a loan this large and certainly not for a speculative project like this. The entire repayment source is based on projected revenues that may not occur. There is a reason that the bonds sold by AAF for the Southern Corridor were priced at 12.75% and had better collateral than is to be pledged to the RRIF loan; this is an extremely risky project and the risk of loss is so great that the FRA must be very certain about the repayment ability of the project before they are willing to risk \$1.8B in taxpayer money. If the repayment risk is so low, Fortress Investment Group should be able to finance the project without the backing of the FRA. Medtronic sold \$17B in bonds in the capital markets on 12/2/14 at an average coupon of 3.63%. Why can't All Aboard Florida? Perhaps because the private market has told them that their project is too risky. I don't believe that the FRA RRIF loan program was set up to be a lender of last resort; I believe it was set up to facilitate access to the capital markets for railroads operating as going concerns; not to fund projects where the probability of repayment is so uncertain. Every passenger train operation in the United States loses money and it takes a great leap to get comfortable that this project will make money and repay its loans. Loan decisions are not made by taking great leaps; they are made making sure that proven repayment ability for the loans is present. The AAF project does not demonstrate that repayment ability.

Based on my review of the EIS, I think that some of the reports contained with (and paid for by All Aboard Florida) contain errors and oversights to the point where they can not be relied upon to make a decision as to the repayment ability of the project.

As an example, several items in the Navigation Discipline Report in the EIS merit mention. The data collected in evaluating the impact of increased bridge closures for the St. Lucie River Bridge was collected only over a two week period in the month of January. The average temperature in January is 55 degrees which is not normal boating weather. The data collected only boat traffic that went by the camera but many boats are known to go under different trestles when the train bridge is down even though the currents are strong and it is kind of dangerous to do so. It seems amazing that the Navigation of the Waters of the United States could be negatively affected by a lending decision based on a report that appears to have many issues.

The Coast Guard has indicated that they are in the process of completing their own navigation studies for the train bridges over the New River, the Loxahatchee River and the St. Lucie River. Based on these reports and input from the public and commercial maritime interests, the Coast Guard will begin a rule-making process that will result in baseline regulation that will govern the opening and closing of the three bridges. According to the Coast Guard, this process could take almost a year. I don't believe that the loan committee for the FRA RRIF loan program can make a reasoned decision as to the repayment ability of the project if they don't even know what constraints these yet-to-be determined baseline regulations will put on the number of trains that FEC and AAF collectively can run over these bridges. Projection based lending is the riskiest type of lending and lending on a project where there are unknown constraints that could negatively affect the primary source of repayment would seem not to be the type of project where the FRA should be willing to risk \$1.8M of taxpayer money. AAF seems to acknowledge the issue on page 25 of their bond offering document for the Southern Corridor. In that document, they wrote that "shared use of the corridor with FEC's freight operations could have an adverse affect on our ability to run our railway efficiently". They then further state "the reliability of our passenger service could be affected negatively by FRC growing freight operations faster than anticipated" and "in the even of a conflict or dispute in the use of the corridor with FEC, AAF may not choose to enforce their rights in the same manner as they would with an unaffiliated third party" . It seems that what they are saying is that the repayment ability for the bonds could be negatively affected by increased freight traffic (or perhaps lower traffic related to the new Coast Guard regulations affecting bridge closures).

All in all, I do not believe that All Aboard Florida has demonstrated sufficient repayment ability at such a level that a \$1.8M FRA RRIF loan should be approved. Loans are made to be repaid. The risk profile presented by this project clearly indicates that they do not qualify for this type of financing.

From: [K KOCH](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF impact
Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2014 9:27:37 PM

There is nothing positive for the Treasure Coast of Fl. if AAF gets its way. We are shut out and left with decreasing property values, disruption of traffic, interruption of maritime activity, delays of first responders, noise, vibration, health of our downtown areas and costs to our cities not to mention concern for wildlife and endangered species in Jonathon Dickenson State Park. Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm and Orlando are ready to sacrifice the Treasure Coast for their gain. It is a very sad scenario which could easily be solved by moving the project west of I-95 where the impact would be minimal. Please protect the Treasure coast from this disaster.

Regards,
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Koch
501 Hernando Street
Ft. Pierce, FL 34949

From: [Ruth Conrad](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF in the Treasure Coast
Date: Saturday, October 25, 2014 7:36:16 AM

I am a homeowner in Jensen Beach near Dixie Hwy/707 and the railroad tracks. Everyone in my neighborhood and everyone I meet at the grocery store, at work, at the mall or any business establishment in Jensen Beach or Stuart is against this devastating train coming through our town and our neighborhoods 32 times a day. It is nothing short of a nightmare for all of us.

This cannot happen. This train needs to be moved out west by the interstate where it does not destroy small towns and neighborhoods.

Thank You,
Harriet Conrad

From: [Silva, Nathan P](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF Intercity Passenger Rail Project Draft EIS and Section 4(f) Evaluation
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 3:22:22 PM
Attachments: [AAF DEIS comments from Central Fla Expressway Authority 12-3-14.pdf](#)

The attached comments are provided on behalf of the Central Florida Expressway Authority (formerly known as the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority) on the above referenced document. The original is being sent via the United States Postal service.

Nathan Silva, P.E., AICP, PMP
Senior Program Manager
ATKINS

482 South Keller Road, Orlando, FL 32810 | Direct: +1 (407) 806-4199 | Cell: +1 (321) 229-5952 | Fax: +1 (407) 806-4500 |
Email: nathan.silva@atkinsglobal.com | Web: www.atkinsglobal.com/northamerica www.atkinsglobal.com

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Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you really need to.

From: [Linda Killian](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF is detrimental to humans and animals in it's destructive path.
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 9:31:23 AM

Dear Mr. Winkle,

On Nov. 18, I attended both the Vero Beach City Council and the Indian River County Commission meetings to hear their responses to the Federal Rail Administration's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The consensus was that the draft environmental impact statement is flawed, inadequate and unacceptable. I applaud our officials for plowing through 550-plus pages to arrive at this conclusion. Generally, I avoid books that are that long.

Given that All Aboard Florida paid for the report and thus had a connection to the consulting firm that conducted the study, I'm not surprised by the outcome. I compare it to a defendant being able to choose his own jury from among his friends.

The study concludes: "Overall impacts from the Project would be minimal." However, one of the county commissioners pointed out that the map at the FRA meetings didn't even include Vero Beach or Sebastian. What does that tell you?

It says to me that we are so "parochial" (AAF's term) that as far as they're concerned, we don't exist. Over 100 years ago, when Henry Flagler created access to the area, population was minimal. That's not the case now.

Please have an UNBIASED study that is not sponsored by the company wanting to put these tracks in, for a true look at the major impact to human life that it will cause.

Sincerely,
Linda Killian
802 SW Keats Avenue

From: [Jane Greenwasser](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF isn't appropriate for Stuart
Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2014 2:29:27 PM

There are a dozen reasons the planned train route is not going to work in Martin County.

We as the population affected hope and pray the funding will NOT be forthcoming.

The rail lines need to be further west to be functional. You are systematically destroying our tourist influx because folks will not visit an area constantly experiencing waits in line for train traffic to pass.

Henry Flagler built his train to accommodate people. You are not doing that with the current plan.

In addition, we know too full well that we will foot the maintenance and upkeep once set in place.

Think about the amount of freight which will be sent south to north once the Panama Canal is restructured.

Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Greenwasser
Stuart

From: [Dennis H. Snyder](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Issue
Date: Thursday, November 27, 2014 9:05:17 AM

1. The idea that people will select a rail method of transportation to the Orlando Airport and then rent a car to Disney makes NO financial sense. The cost of rail over driving will bring this concept to bankrupt soon. Then the freight carries will take over the lines at the cost to the public. Running additional freight through towns will cause major issues and added expense to the communities without increased revenue to offset the cost.

More the rail lines to 95 corridor.

Dennis H. Snyder
dennishsnider@yahoo.com
Cell: 630-240-8080

From: [Joe Handley](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Letter of Support
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:59:20 AM
Attachments: [AAF Support Letter.PDF](#)

From: dcandkcbuckingham@comcast.net
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Cc: floridanotallaboard@gmail.com
Subject: AAF Letter to FRA Winkle
Date: Saturday, November 22, 2014 1:39:13 PM
Attachments: [AAF ltr to FRA.pdf](#)

I sent the attached letter to the FRA.

Keep the faith!

Don

From: [joe kern](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF neglected the jobs that will be lost due to the effect of very limited boat access to the north and south forks of the Saint Lucie River, The CEIS also neglects to mention Federal Regulations 33 (bridge operations).
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 7:55:02 AM

Joe Kern
Palm City

From: carolannetn50@aol.com
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF No Good for East Coast
Date: Monday, October 27, 2014 12:04:40 PM

If this issue was put to a vote, it would not get approved. To have so many trains running through our towns would disrupt life for all the residents in every way possible. In this town of Vero Beach the only hospital is just east of the railroad tracks, if a train was stuck there as so often happens a person could die waiting for the train to move.

There are tracks out west, far out in a more isolated part of the state. Why not use them? Especially if they plan to run from Orlando to Miami with no stations for miles until closer to the Miami area. To use a federal loan which is tax payer money for some thing that would not even afford most of us any good should be illegal.

Re think your plans and stop this train before it starts. C. Eaton, Vero Beach, FL.

From: [Alex and Jill Miller](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF NO!
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 12:58:16 PM

As a Martin County resident I am very against the All Aboard Florida initiative for two main reasons. First, the additional trains would be disruptive for vehicle and boat movement in Stuart. Also, there are many examples of state supported passenger rail systems that over-serve the demand for it. AAF will likely end with a billion plus government load and when its unsuccessful due to lack of use, it will end up as another one of those mass transit failures supported by tax payers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alex Miller
1281 SW Fast St
Palm City, FL 34990

From: [Michael Scully](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF NOOOOOOO!!!!!!
Date: Thursday, October 30, 2014 5:23:15 PM

I am a 35 year resident of Croissant Park, in Fort Lauderdale. I am opposed to the new train line that will take NOBODY to Orlando.

Who will use this train when the other trains are not even full?

How many MORE times a day will I be stuck at the rail road crossing waiting to get across town?

How many noisy train horns will I hear all night long?

I am COMPLETELY opposed to this project!

Thank you, Diane Scully

From: autosportsg
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com; floridanotallaboard@gmail.com
Subject: AAF NOT!!!
Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2014 1:27:53 PM

FYI copies below of several letters which I have written.

I think that my points are clear.

If I am misunderstanding anything, please advise.

Cheers,
Glen Efinger
Stuart FL.

30Aug
To

- rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com
- John.Winkle@DOT.Gov
- Bill@billnelson.senate.gov
- Greg_Langowski@rubio.senate.gov
- CongressmanPatrick.Murphy@mail.house.gov
- and 10 more...

No All Aboard Fla

Dear Sir/Ma'am-

Just to clarify up-front, before I get to the point, I am very much against AAF, for all of the commonly offered (good) reasons, (as compared to the proponents and their glossy pictures and excuses, AAF IS a for-profit enterprise), plus the fact that the living room window in my nice home in Martin County is approx 200 yards from, & facing, the FEC rail line; well there goes more of my property value, in a continued stagnant market...

Having stated my personal position on it, and trying to keep an open mind and an objective perspective on it, I have a question, and possibly something to consider, if it hasn't already been done, which may settle some of the dispute re how much disruption will there be to local road & waterways due to the frequent crossing closings. A real-world "impact" test would consist of simply closing all of the crossings in sequence to simulate the normal proposed schedule daily, over the course of a week or so, just so we would all know just how much the traffic will be impacted, and then we can stop with all the rhetoric. This would likely have to be done with advance public notice, but would have to be done accurately, no "cheating" just because it's a test.

Thank you for your consideration, please forward this letter as appropriate, and again, apologies if this has already been done, proposed or planned.

Respectfully,
Glen Efinger
a registered voter
Stuart FL

From: autosportsg [mailto:autosportsg@bellsouth.net]

Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2014 12:23 PM

To: Governor Rick Scott

Subject: NOT All Aboard Fla

Subject- Not all aboard Fla

To- Governor Rick Scott

Dear Sir-

As a Martin County resident since 1974, small business owner, homeowner, and a registered voter (an Independent, strongly favoring the Republicans...), I must express my strong objection to the proposed "All Aboard Fla" program, some of the reasons being:

- Much added congestion on the roadways at RR crossings, due to the obvious.
- Impedance of water traffic, as above.
- Noise, affecting businesses and residences in close proximity to the tracks.
- Danger from high-speed trains, again obvious.
- Loss of business due to limited ability to travel east/west.
- Lowered property values, due to added noise and traffic through certain residential areas.
- Increased local travel times.
- Increased traffic on secondary roadways, not designed for through traffic, as local residents adjust their routes to avoid getting stopped at RR crossings
- Added response times of EMS, Fire, and Police, both Stuart & the county.

I live here because I like living here, and I have lived & worked within 300 yards of the FEC tracks for 40 years. I can attest to the fact that the present rail system is at the limit with freight traffic as it is, and the additional proposed high-speed passenger system has no business being used on a rail line that was set up over 100 years ago, especially when it runs directly through major East Florida cities, which were nothing but pioneer towns at the time.

This proposed route is a complete negative in every respect for those that live, work, and vacation here, and does absolutely nothing to improve the local economy or quality of life.

The motivation for the project is \$\$\$ for private corporations/individuals, the essence of capitalism, which I support, but it shouldn't be at our expense.

Respectfully,

Glen Efinger

Stuart, Fla.

From: [Matt](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF of course
Date: Thursday, November 6, 2014 10:07:39 PM

I live in Port Saint Lucie. I can tell you without a doubt this idea of a commuter train is absurd.

We have seen all these studies and hype on how good this will be for Florida. I have not seen one study regarding ridership, the ticket prices, or operating costs or anything else that can be called a financial analysis. Apparently I am just supposed to take the developers and the governments word for it. It is a known fact than not one commuter train in the world runs at a profit. Why should this be any different? The taxpayers will wind up paying the difference. If you can assure me that we the taxpayers will not pay a dime for any part of this including backing the bonds I might just say ok, go for it, but as it is, no way.

Not only will this not be a money maker it will ruin many peoples real estate values and as a result lower real estate tax revinue and I will have to make up the difference. It will cost counties the cost of maintenance of RR crosings as well.

Again, no way. I hope congress will put a stop to any funding by the government for this project, I don't want to pay for it.

Matthew Rensen

From: [Nancy Oldham](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Cc: nano767@yahoo.com
Subject: AAF on the Treasure Coast.
Date: Sunday, November 30, 2014 9:12:35 PM

Don't even begin to entertain the thought of moving the AAF system west to a location parallel to I-95. The cost alone of erecting tracks is prohibitive. Invading new areas with these trains cannot work-there are too many roads and neighborhoods and businesses in the way.

AAF is not needed. People desiring to travel between MIA and MCO can fly or take the bus or other transportation.

Nancy Oldham

From: [My Gmail](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF on the Treasure Coast
Date: Monday, November 10, 2014 10:02:34 AM

Please add my objections to AAF as follows:

Severe concern for delay of first responders due to AAF and increased freight traffic.

Added accidents and fatalities to people and wild life.

Impact on quality of life of residents due to noise and vibration.

Impact on delay of vehicular and pedestrian traffic due to increased crossing closures.

Safety degradation due to land level verses raised or below ground level travel used in Europe and the NE corridor.

Too many more to list !

Thank your for your consideration !

Sent from my iPad

From: [Paul Bernard](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Cc: [psbernard](#); [LAZ](#)
Subject: AAF OPINION
Date: Monday, December 1, 2014 5:20:01 PM

Good Day!

I am ALL 4 AAF!!!

The sooner the better!!!

Born in Ft. Lauderdale and have been in Martin County for over 15 years.

Would like to ride this train before I'm DEAD!

Regards, Paul Bernard

p.s. ...didn't the voters of THIS state vote FOR the high speed rail just before Rick Scott came on board?

From: [Phil Macken](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF OPINION/COMMENTS
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 6:44:35 PM

It's time for AAF management to tell the truth. A blind man with a cane can see that passenger rail service will not provide the profits to sustain a high speed service. There just isn't the ridership for long term operations within these cities. This is not NYC, Boston, or Chicago. So when it fails within 12 to 18 months, what follows to make up the difference will be increased "freight" traffic. With already improved infrastructure at possible taxpayers expense, this should be a seamless transition. Phase one is the wrap from Miami to Orlando & Tampa. Phase two will be the extension from Melbourne to Jacksonville. Makes perfect sense.

If AAF management had been up front about the service from the start, I would have asked for additional information and ties to the revamping of the Miami Port, the Panama Canal, and the possible economic impact for the state. Then I could make an informed decision and feel comfortable about it.

I cannot see this happening any other way than I have described, so Fess up AAF and stop the smoke and mirrors display.

Phil Macken
Port St Lucie, FL

From: [Marcus Rothstein](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF passing through Stuart FL
Date: Friday, September 26, 2014 11:34:03 AM

Please do not allow the outside interests of big business to overshadow our county and City's concerns, please require the big businesses to cooperate and move their rail line west of the primary corridor (meaning out west past the Turnpike where there are north-south rail lines already) and away for our population corridor within 5-7 miles of the coast.

Thank you.

Marcus & Cynthia Rothstein

Marcus Rothstein

608 SW Cleveland Ave

Stuart, FL 34994-2812 USA

+001-772-288-4647 (home)

+001-860-306-8770 (mobile)

+001-772-221-2461 (fax)

From: [John Shaffer](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Cc: johnshaffer632@comcast.net
Subject: AAF Phase II EIS Comments
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 6:32:08 PM
Importance: High

Dear Mr. John Winkle –

As someone who is familiar with the NEPA process, someone who has conducted FHWA noise analyses, and someone who has drafted major portions of several Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), the subject EIS appears significantly flawed in its development of alternatives, impact analysis, and need for action.

In only analyzing N-S segments which utilize a single corridor, the EIS appears to fail to meet the CEQ regulations with respect to development of alternatives. Specifically, section 1502.14 requires the agency to “rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives”, and to “include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency.”

The EIS fails to accurately capture the future without project (aka no action) condition. Specifically, the study inappropriately assumes that the future without project does not include establishing quiet zones, an activity that has already begun in earnest.

The noise modeling methodology is unclear at best. Future without project levels appear to be significantly understated, and do not appear to include future roadway noise. Any model used should be calibrated and verified using known noise sources.

The EIS makes no attempt to abate residential noise impacts along the N-S corridor beyond stating that “...the use of wayside (pole-mounted) horns would eliminate any severe impacts and would reduce noise levels in comparison to the No-Action Alternative”, a proposal that would be negated with the establishment of quiet zones, and has the potential to actually increase the duration and intensity for some residential units, an analysis of which was never provided.

The EIS states “none of these [impacted] parcels are within environmental justice communities” and “there would be no disproportionate effects from changes in noise.” It is important to note that although the impacted properties may not meet the definition of an “environmental justice community” those living closest to the corridor, which are certainly not in the higher economic rungs, will be disproportionately impacted.

The EIS states “there would be potential vibration impact at a total of 3,317 residential, 513 institutional receptors, three TV studios, three recording studios, nine auditoriums and three theaters along the N-S Corridor”, and, without defining “acceptably high” except to say that the action would not cause “structural damage” states that “AAF would minimize vibration impacts by wheel and rail maintenance that will control unacceptably high vibration levels”. While maintenance may result in less vibration than would otherwise occur, it can in no way

abate the vibration associated with the adding additional trains, independent of their level of maintenance.

The noise analysis inappropriately assumes a constant ground attenuation factor of 4.5 dB per distance doubling. A factor of 3.0 dB per distance doubling is more generally employed for highly impervious areas, such as those found along the corridor in Palm Beach County, particularly those near major roadway crossings.

The need for the improvement, particularly the frequency of trips appears to be based more on a "if you build it they will come" than any scientific data. Many others have questioned the need for this improvement and potential ties to the Miami Harbor deepening project. The EIS appears to leave open the possibility of synergies created for freight, yet the noise analysis deals only with additional noise associated with passengers.

Table 5.2.2-10 indicates for Palm Beach County that at grade crossings will have a noise level of 82 dB at a distance of 50' and the additional trains will reduce the noise level by 7.1 dB. While I suspect the authors are taking credit for elimination of train horns, for reasons described earlier, this is inappropriate. Moreover, it is unclear whether the 82 dB is truly existing or future without project. Either way, as one of many Palm Beach County residents who lives within 200' of an at grade intersection, and assuming 3.0 dB per distance doubling, the 82 dBA "existing" noise level a 50' would be expected to be approximately 76 dB near my home. It is important to note that this level of noise which one would generally expect from appliances such as vacuum cleaners and garbage disposals.

More important than ravaging what is left of my property value and potentially blighting my area, the health effects associated with long term exposure to noise are well documented including damages to the heart, brain, liver, emotional disturbances, and lack of productivity. If AAF intends to reap the economic benefits associated with their proposed project, they should have an obligation to address noise abatement in a meaningful way (e.g. noise walls, residential soundproofing, residential acquisition, etc.), as opposed to taking credit for stationary horns and/or quiet zones (by others).

Please telephone with any questions.

Sincerely,

John Shaffer, PMP
632 Marbella Lane
North Palm Beach, FL 33403
561/714-6718

From: [Loshe, Thomas K. \(KSC-IMCS-200\)\[Abacus Technology\]](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Project
Date: Friday, November 21, 2014 7:08:17 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

I think the AAF project is an excellent idea and is being handled in a very professional and public-oriented manner. I am excited about the opportunities for Floridians when this service is up and running. I think the DEIS clearly shows the best choice for this effort and should be approved without hesitation.

I fully advocate this endeavor!

Tom Loshe

Quality Engineer/Lead ISO Auditor, SH&MA
Abacus Technology
IMCS Contract
Mail Code: IMCS-126
Office: 321-861-3755
Cell: 321-243-9747
e-mail: Thomas.K.Loshe@nasa.gov



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From: [Todd Schanel](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF Project
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 9:16:19 AM

To Whom it May Concern:

I have lived in the Evergrene community in Palm Beach Gardens for the last 11 years and own a business in Jupiter and my family and my business would both be negatively impacted by the proposed All Aboard Florida (AAF) project.

I am opposed to FRA granting a \$1.6 billion loan for AAF. I am particularly concerned that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to adequately and accurately analyze the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and Reasonable Alternatives.

The decision to proceed with the construction of the stations that would service the proposed rail service amounts to segmentation as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality see 40 CFR Part 1502.4. The environmental impacts of this construction project should have been addressed as part of the Proposed Action for this NEPA analysis.

The Purpose and Need for this EIS is so narrowly defined as to preclude otherwise reasonable alternatives from being considered.

The evaluation of Alternatives in the EIS is insufficient and does not follow the requirements in 40 CFR 1502.14 which require impacts from alternatives to be "presented in comparative form, thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker and the public." As presented, it is not possible for members of the public, or presumably the decision makers to clearly compare the alternatives.

The assumption of the number of passenger rail trips per day and number of cargo rail trips per day do not seem reasonable. The assumptions of the number of, types of trains, and speeds of operations should be reconsidered. These assumptions weigh heavily into the evaluation of impacts, particularly the noise and vibration analyses. Failure to adequately scope the rail traffic will have significant effects on the impacts experienced by those of us who live and work along the FEC line.

If after further consideration it is determined that these rail assumptions are accurate, then it is recommended that FRA build these assumptions into the mitigation measures outlined in the Record of Decision. These would therefore become binding requirements of the rail operator and ensure that the impacts experienced by sensitive noise receptors along the rail line do not exceed the impacts presented in the EIS. If the assumptions are determined to require modification the NEPA process should again be opened for additional scoping discussions.

In addition, I am concerned over the impact that the proposed project would have on marine navigation and the analysis presented in the EIS. The Draft EIS Section 5.1.3, *Navigation*, contains flawed assumptions and therefore flawed analysis. First, marine monitoring of boat activity at the moveable Loxahatchee Bridge in Palm Beach County was

only conducted during December 2013. This is not representative of boating activity year round. There is significantly more boating activity during summer months. Second, the Draft EIS uses the “existing condition” assumption that the Loxahatchee River Bridge closes an average of 10 times a day based on data provided by FECR. Based on my personal experience living in the area, that assumption seems very high (there are fewer closures than assumed as existing condition). Section 4.4.1 confirms my personal experience stating that video evidence: “observed number of closures is less than half of the daily closures reported by FECR (10 closures per day (Existing conditions).” It is obviously favorable for the Project to assume an existing condition with a high number of closures and a low amount of boat activity because that would reduce the impact of the Project. The analysis overstates the number of existing closures and understates the amount of boat traffic and therefore significantly underestimates the impacts of the Project. It is impossible to evaluate the Project with flawed data and analysis. Additional study should be undertaken and mitigation considered to address the impacts.

There are particular marine safety concerns at the Loxahatchee bridge. The current in that area is extremely strong and the opening is narrow. Navigation under the moveable railroad bridge is currently a challenge and presents significant safety concerns. With increased number of boats waiting for the bridge to open 30+ times a day, it is increasingly unsafe for marine navigation. Additional study should be undertaken to evaluate how the Project would impact navigation and steps taken to ensure that public safety will be protected.

The Project’s proposed mitigation to manage marine traffic is to create a predictable schedule:

“Develop a set schedule for the down times of each bridge for *passenger* [emphasis added] rail service. Passenger rail service is anticipated to operate on consistent daily schedules that are both predictable and reliable with minimal deviations. Local mariners should be able to predict approximate crossing times once they are familiar with the passenger rail schedule, which will be consistent and unchanging from week to week. Mariners will be able to plan travel times and avoid unnecessary wait times according to the posted schedule. “

There is currently no predictability to the bridge closures since it is used for freight. If the Project opens the door to additional freight traffic, FECR must be held accountable to their commitment to have predictable bridge closures. Furthermore, the bridge closures should be reasonably short. According to the DEIS:

“The Loxahatchee River represents approximately 23.2% of the marine activity in Palm Beach County, excluding revenue from port activities. Because the economic activity associated with the Loxahatchee River is located in Palm Beach County, the total economic value of this river is equivalent to 23.2% of the economic value of the marine industry in Palm Beach County, or \$398.6 million. This total value is comprised of \$219.0 million in direct expenditures, \$50.9 in indirect effects, and \$128.7 million in induced effects. This activity supports a total of 2,755 jobs and \$114.9 million in personal income (see Table 4.2-8).”

I do not believe that the project impacts have not been properly or fully evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, especially with respect to need for the Project, noise, safety, wildlife, and marine navigation. Lacking appropriate evaluation based on

accurate data, impacts and mitigation cannot be properly identified or alternatives evaluated. The Project should be halted until evaluation of impacts and alternatives is complete.

Sincerely,

Todd Schanel

From: [Ken Teixeira](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF project
Date: Monday, December 1, 2014 12:56:14 PM

Dear Mr. Winkle:

Less than 1 mile to the east of the railroad tracks in Stuart, FL lies Martin Memorial Hospital. Train passage through the center of Stuart, designed during the horse-and-buggy days, currently delays access to the hospital for ambulances and anyone else getting there by automobile. The frequency of train passage occasioned by AAF would more than double the existing delays.

Futhermore, this frequent train passage would greatly restrict river traffic, seriously inconveniencing both recreational and commercial traffic on the Saint Lucie River. The train bridge in Stuart goes down and comes up very very slowly (much slower than the double leaf bascule on the nearby road bridge).

Therefore, I strongly request that you disapprove AAF's usage of the eastern train tracks that go through Stuart, FL.

Please note also that studies indicate the size of the ridership on AAF would not come close to paying for it. Is it worth the disruption to numerous shoreline communities just to shuttle a few tourists between Orlando and Miami?

Respectfully,

Kenneth Teixeira
1102 SE Mitchell Ave #303
Port Saint Lucie, FL 34952

From: [brian morris](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF proposal for Miami to orlando....
Date: Friday, September 26, 2014 12:53:16 PM

We here on the treasure coast mostly oppose this coastal route and wonder why it can't be routed west of the coast....I absolutely support the use of trains in moving people between cities and believe it would be very successful ...However, this route will not work and stops on the treasure coast will be necessary to convince people that this is going to be an asset to the area.....If the above is proposed then this will be a great advancement in transportation and welcomed by all here.....thankyou, Brian Morris, 5607 eagle drive, Fort Pierce Fl...

From: [jeff harris](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF proposal
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 4:50:49 PM

I am opposed to the Orlando to Miami passenger train for various reasons. As a life time resident of Florida, I was born in Miami, grew up in Fort Lauderdale and been in Martin county for the last 24 years. I have seen the effects the existing trains have had on traffic and boating. It will get worse as the population in Florida continues to grow.

The existing tracks are not and were not made to accept high speed rail which means we have a serious safety issue. The bridges over the water ways are also not engineered to accept the additional crossings not to mention the speed that they will be moving.

This is a smokescreen for the investors to move more freight and that has been well know by the public.

I am all in favor of a high speed train west of the population that doesn't interfere with the general public and is engineered and paid for by the investors, not the government- read taxpayers.

Jeff Harris

From: [Christine Fletcher](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF Proposal
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 9:05:11 AM

This is to vehemently disagree with the proposed high speed rail to pass through our beautiful treasure coast. The route through the treasure coast would decimate our towns. The railroad, if built, should be west of this area, in the rural area of Florida, so as not to disrupt the lives we have developed here. The only real reason for this new railroad, as I see it, is future freight movement occasioned by the expansion of the Panama Canal.

I believe our lives will be disrupted detrimentally. There are other options. For once big business should consider the rights of the citizens of Florida.

Please consider this my vote NO to this proposal.

Christine Fletcher
2726 Laurel Drive
Vero Beach, FL 32960

From: [Dick Tuschick](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF proposal
Date: Thursday, November 20, 2014 10:53:24 AM

Dear Mr. Winkie,

We need your help!

I writing this letter as representative of the canal community of Seagate Harbor in Palm City FL which lies to the west of the St. Lucie river opening bridges. The community consists of 187 waterfront homes, most of which have large vessels that require opening both the Roosevelt bridge AND the railroad that lies 200' to the east.

Our homeowners have selected this location to live specifically because of the relative safe and easy access to the ICW and the Atlantic Ocean, just a few miles away. In addition we selected this location because of easy access to downtown Stuart, easy access to the Martin Memorial county hospital and last but not least the “small town” quiet feel to the area.

Last week I attended the DEIS meeting in Stuart that was put on by the All Aboard Florida organization and the FRA.

My interest was specifically to learn:

1. How the proposed railroad traffic would affect navigation thru the area where the railroad bridge is located.
2. What safety measures were being proposed for the numerous road crossings involved .
3. Assess the business model used to support the AAF business.
4. What the ultimate objective of FECR is in this project.

5. What other impacts to the community might be.

NAVIGATION Considerations

This section, like all the other sections presented was very professional, impressive and definitely supported the story that the train company wants to promote.....not necessarily the real story....

The research and the simulation done by the consulting firm contracted for by the Railroad company is virtually worthless and serves only to hide a very dangerous navigation situation.

-

If the St. Lucie river railroad bridge is allowed to close as often as proposed by the railroad company, navigation will be so severely restricted that it represents an unfair and needless hazard to all the boaters navigating this area. I believe that closer and more realistic analysis will indicate that traffic will be stopped for 50 out of 60 minutes during normal boat traffic hours.

In addition to just the significant delays caused by the bridge closings, given the large volume of boat traffic thru this area there will be accidents and unfortunately injuries and eventually **fatalities**.

There are thousands of boats owners and marine businesses that count on reasonable unrestricted navigation thru this waterway. This waterway is the "lifeblood" of this community.

As a US citizen and Florida boat owner I believe we have a right to maintain reasonably unrestricted access to this waterway.

It should not be possible that one company or special interest to be able to, in effect, shut down navigation thru such a high traffic waterway and cause the

kind of disruption that will ensue.

Safety Considerations

On the subject of SAFETY as it relates to the communities through which this proposed train traffic will pass, I was appalled at the total disregard to common sense. The notion that you can just drop in a 21st century high speed train system into a HEAVILY populated area where the original rail route was implemented over 100 years ago with hundreds of road crossings and have no negative ramifications is extremely short sighted, If not totally self serving.

In other countries, France as an example, where a viable high speed train system exists, great caution is paid to safe interaction with the existing environment. As an example, in the entire country there is not one road/railroad crossing where cars must wait for the trains to pass. All road crossing are either raised over the tracks or tunneled under the rail bed. In addition, all railways are completely fenced in to prevent animals or pedestrians from accessing the tracks. The AAF proposed “upgrades “ to the hundreds of road crossings that will be involved are at best a 10% solution and leaves the population at enormous safety risk.

Given the projected high volume and speed of the trains there will be accidents AND fatalities, it is just a matter of when and how many. Multiply the number of crossings and the number of proposed

trains....the resulting number is most alarming !!

There is no need for these fatalities. Lets stop them before they happen!

Assessing the AAF Business model

Hear again, common sense and sound business analysis seemed to be lacking. The proposed traffic volumes cannot be supported by any reasonable analysis or actual data from other similar operations and it is highly questionable if the projected cost figures (not shared with the public in detail) are even in the right ball park. I definitely do not have access to all the detail data, but based on what has been shared it leads me to believe that the actual profitability of the AAF is not a concern if even a real objective of the business.

As a clear example, look at the link between Miami and West Palm Beach. We already have an excellent Tri-Rail service in place that is NOT profitable. Why do we need AAF service and how could it possibly be profitable??

Since there will be Private Activity Bonds involved (ultimately taxpayer backed) I would suggest that there is a very high risk of default on these bonds and in no instance should these be approved.

Ultimate objective of the FECR

I must acknowledge that the following analysis and comments are based on less than 100% of the data and information I would like to have available but it does look like:

1. The way AAF is proposed there is no real concern or motivation for profit.
2. Without profit the AAF will not survive (unless government subsidies are granted)
3. The FECR rail beds need upgrading to support expansion of their freight business.
4. The freight business is quite profitable and will be more profitable if freight traffic can be increased. (see #6)
5. As part of the AAF proposal the FECR will get the rail bed upgrades they need to expand freight traffic.
6. There is a government backed plan in process to upgrade the port facilities in Miami to accept/process a larger amount of freight coming from the new Panama Canal.
7. If AAF were to go bankrupt FECR would “inherit” the upgraded rail bed system at virtually no cost.
8. If AAF does eventually get government subsidies it will still be a “no cost” way for FECR to get upgraded rail beds.

In summary, as a very experienced business manager, this looks to me like a great strategy for FECR to grown their freight business at little or no cost to them. All the costs are paid for by the residents of Florida or the taxpayers of the entire country.

Other impacts on the Florida communities affected

As you dig into the details of the AAF proposal you realize that every community along the FEC rail bed will incur major negative impacts to access and traffic all along the proposed corridor. In our town alone there are 9 road crossings, some of them with extremely high levels of car and pedestrian traffic. I suspect that if detail traffic studies are done on these individual crossings it will be found that traffic will back up onto Rt1 and cause major traffic congestion problems in several instances.

Access to several key destinations will be significantly impaired. As an example, access to The Martin County hospital and to the Downtown Stuart area, which are key to the lives of thousands, will be affected.

Summary

It is a very rare occasion that I have witnessed a proposed project that will benefit so few and harm so many as the proposed AAF venture. If this proposal is allowed to continue it will be the most blatant example of a large well funded corporation “manipulating the system” to benefit their corporate objectives with the cost being carried by thousands of citizens and taxpayers.

More importantly....as a result of the AAF proposal people will be hurt and killed in accidents along these rail beds that should not be allowed to happen.

Also worthy of note, the marine industry in this area will be devastated because of the bridge closings and hundreds of jobs will

be lost.

Lastly, thousands of homeowners will see a significant drop in waterfront property values due to limited access to the ICW and Atlantic ocean.

I am a strong PROPONANT of a high speed rail service in our country and would love to see one available in Florida but ONLY if it is implemented so that it benefits the population that it is there to serve not harm them. If our objective is to have a truly viable high speed service then we should seek an implementation that does not negatively affect tens of thousands of people. It can be done, but it may not serve the profit motives of the FECR.

Please, we need your help at the highest levels of government to stop this disaster from happening.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Most sincerely,

Richard D. Tuschick

Waterways Committee Chairman

Seagate Harbor Homeowners Association

1751 SW Commodore Place

Palm City, FL 34990

From: bernhard.albrecht@verizon.net
To: AAF_Comments@vzb.com
Cc: eve.samples@tcpalm.com; anthony.westbury@tcpal.com
Subject: AAF proposed commuter rail
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 8:26:01 PM

John Winkle
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Room W38-311
Washington, DC 20590

Mr. Winkle,

Being a new resident to Florida, having recently bought a house in Port St Lucie, I have read all the articles I could about the proposed new commuter train utilizing existing freight rails from Miami to Orlando, but find many confusing conflicts in both the report commissioned and paid for by AAF / FEC, and the information put forward by both of the companies.

Most confusing is the continuing use of diesel engines for the new proposed commuter train, when clearly the use of electric trains would be the only realistic solution to new trains, since this would remove pollution from our air, as the companies state is their goal in getting more cars off the roads. Since I have worked for a large utility in the Northeast and dealt with new commuter trains, electric is the only sensible train of the future.

If the existing rail lines cannot be upgraded, then there is no benefit, and the real solution is to build the new electric rail line further west parallel to the Turnpike / I-95 route, on State the right of way, where the freight trains could also run along side but on separate rails.

I believe the Federal Govt's main concern with this request for monies and the build proposal should be centered on good environmental design / consideration.

More pollution so close to the Indian River and the ocean is not in good environmental design or desire by any means.

With all the talk on the Federal and Global level about Global Warming, one has to wonder who would allow such an obvious pollution source to move forward.

Secondly, since the companies are not installing new stops along the proposed route north of West Palm Beach, is it really a true commuter train, or just a way to add siding for future freight trains, and get the Federal Govt. to loan them the money for this, hidden under the guise of a commuter rail program ?

When I saw that the parent company was indeed putting out bonds to the financial community, I called my broker (at one of the larger NY / NJ brokerage companies) and ask him to look into these high interest paying bonds to take advantage of what seemed like a great rate.

His answer a day later was that his firm prohibited him from buying or selling these bonds, which the financial community considers "junk" due to their extremely high risk. He told me the firm believes the bonds would probably default soon and any principal would be lost, since they were considered such high risk "junk", and they did not see a future for the proposed commuter rail project.

He strongly advised me against buying into them, which I shall heed.

Thirdly, when I looked into the possible success of a new commuter rail line, I found it disturbing that there was a failed attempt years ago in Florida, the Florida Fun Train, which lost millions and went bankrupt after two years. Also, Florida has an existing commuter rail line running from Miami to Orlando with Amtrak, which I believe is losing money each and every year. This begs the question, what makes AAF believe there is such a high demand for another train running the identical route ?

Through out the US, there is no profitable commuter rail line simply because the American people prefer to drive their own cars from point to point and have their freedom. Even with clean, efficient bus service available, people still opt for driving their own vehicle. So again, the question is why would the parent company create a subsidiary to run a commuter train on freight rail lines ? could it be to have someone else pay for the rail improvements for additional freight trains ?

Lastly, a very good point was recently raised by a local Realtor and a former rail employee in the local Scripps Treasure Coast Newspaper that if the commuter truly would be such a needed item, the financial impacts on the communities the rail is proposed to run thru would be so negative that it would be a much better idea, even though more expensive initially, to build the rail line parallel to the Turnpike / I-95

corridor.

The damage this additional rail would create in the existing area of eastern Florida for the Boating Industry, the Realty Industry, and just as importantly, the Tourist Industry is so high over time that it only makes sense to make an investment in moving the rail line to the west inland, and return the eastern route to a natural setting, which should be all our goals moving forward so future generations benefit from it, not suffer the obvious consequences of our avoidable mistakes.

I apologize if this email is a bit long, but I as well as many of my fellow residents I have spoken to feel this is the wrong project for this area, and indeed for the entire east coast of Florida, and seems to be pushed forward by the parent company and the Investment Firms behind them for profit only, not for the benefit of Florida.

Bernie Albrecht

From: [Warren Schauer](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF proposed rail service
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 11:40:07 PM

Gentlemen:

This proposed rail service causes great concern to me and my family who must cross this rail line many times per week. The number of potential trains running on this track will cause an inconvenience to families like ours who will have longer and more frequent wait times and the threat of added noise and potential rail accidents as these trains move at alarming speeds through our neighborhoods is frightening. Add to this that this will have no benefit for our community makes it a non-starter.

We oppose this idea and ask that you discontinue any further planning.

Very truly yours,
Warren and Janet Schauer
1770 Cypress Lane
Vero Beach, FL

From: [DICK CAHOON](#)
To: [AAF Comments Reply](#)
Subject: AAF protest comments
Date: Sunday, December 7, 2014 10:55:44 AM

Dear Mr. Winkle,

December 7, 2014

I am writing to protest the proposed passenger rail All Aboard Florida (AAF) through downtown Ft. Lauderdale. One would think that Tri-Rail would be popular enough to make money, but that is not the case. If so, why would a competing service be profitable. I do not believe that passenger rail service is a viable business.

The project proposes to virtually block river traffic by greatly increasing use of an existing railway bridge in Ft. Lauderdale that blocks all boats from using the New River when it is in use. To be used the bridge trestle must be lowered to connect the rail line and block the river traffic. Instead, traffic should be re-routed to the tall bridge over the New River to the west of I-95, or a new tall bridge should be built to replace the surface level trestle that is currently used sparingly.

I believe there will be challenges to the project that will delay and kill it. In Ft. Lauderdale, the project would block vessels from using the New River for much of the day. This will jeopardize the marine industry, the largest employer in Ft. Lauderdale. It will also make it nearly impossible for me to take my tiny boat past the traffic jam that will be caused by the vast increase in the use of the existing railroad bridge.

Sincerely yours,

Dick Cahoon
2460 Cat Cay Ln
FT. Lauderdale FL 33312
Bchprop@mac.com
215-752-3752 Dick's cell

Sent from Dick Cahoon's iPad Mini

From: [Ken Bryan](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com; john.winkle@dot.gov
Subject: AAF Public Comments and Petition Signers
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 4:05:26 PM
Attachments: [120314_AAF_comments.docx](#)
[DEIS Public Comments.xlsx](#)

Please find the attached cover letter and public comments from Rails-to-Trails Conservancy supporters regarding the All Aboard Florida DEIS. We strongly feel that a trail should be required to mitigate the adverse affects of the project, such as social injustice, environmental and connectivity issues. These negative impacts have been detailed in past submissions by RTC. Thank you.

From: [Deb Duvall](#)
To: John.winkle@DOT.gov; AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF railroad comments
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 8:52:26 AM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)

Mr. Winkle, First let me say that with the expansion of the Panama Canal, future increased freight and passenger rail, I see these as good for the State of Florida and support them, however **not on the existing FEC tracks along the coast through Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and the northern Counties**. To make this a viable economic engine so to speak, a western alternative needs to be found. By laying new tracks/using CSX tracks for the increased freight and high-speed rail, it would make both more efficient with less delays and not have a negative impact on our coastal towns, hospitals, marine industry, traffic and property values. Thank you for your attention to this matter and I remain confident that alternatives will be found. Debra Duvall



Debra Duvall

Broker/Owner

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[website](#) | [blog](#) | [vCard](#) | [email](#)



From: [Shawn Engebretsen](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF railroad
Date: Monday, November 3, 2014 10:16:45 PM

I am strongly against the proposed railroad plan. As a 57 year resident I feel that this would very negatively impact this community in a severe way. Disruption of roadways and waterways even for what is suggested to be a short time is so numerous that it would have a very negative impact on this community. Safety issues due to lack of emergency vehicle access in multiple areas is a real concern. Noise and pollution is certainly not something that we take lightly. Loss of downtown parking spaces that is already at a premium is counterproductive. Potential safety issues at crossings is a concern. There are many more negatives and absolutely no positives for this area. Finally, this just does not make financial sense. Thank you.

From: [jbskedd](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF route plan
Date: Friday, October 31, 2014 1:43:55 PM

* against it - SOLUTION: extend tracks parallel to Tollway & Expressway 95; as it is Now, from Miami to West Palm....WHY: a) Speed can be maintained- more DIRECT/less obstacle interference. b) Treasure Coast access can drive/bus to 95 & board in Ft.Pierce/Vero....RESULT: EVERYBODY Happy !!?Why force Speed train to DIVIDE/cut thru NARROWEST part of Treasure Coast land; (tossing/throwing people/buildings/businesses, on the EAST side into the Atlantic/ on the WEST side into Crops/farmland) ??

From: william.flint
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF route thru Vero Beach
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 4:37:59 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am opposed to AAF's proposal to send 32 trains a day and freight trains at night thru Vero Beach since this activity will greatly diminish the quality of life in this community. Your commission must consider an alternative route with new trackage thru central Florida. Yes, this adds to the cost of the project, however, AAF has the ability to write down the cost over a specified period of years.

William Flint
1737 80th Avenue
Vero Beach, FL 32966

From: [Vertrice Smith](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF Safety
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 8:48:21 PM

December 3, 2014

Mr. Winkle,

I often go to the beauty salon in downtown Fort Pierce located five stores down from the trains. Several weeks ago, I went at my usual time and place to have my hair washed and styled and listen to the latest events in our beautiful, old Fort Pierce. On this day, the planned expansion of AAF and FEC were the topic of conversation when my hairdresser, Rita, related to me an incident she had witnessed with a freight train. Here is her story.

Rita parks her car in the city garage on the west side of the tracks. She then walks to work by crossing the tracks and moving down five stores to her shop. On this particular morning, however, this simple walk was a difficult one to make, a difficult one to experience.

The freight train (yes, I do know your EIS concerns only AAF and the proposed “passenger” service) came along as scheduled each morning about this time. It carried numerous cars—63 of them WALMART---, dozens of chemical containers and many more cars I did not readily recognize. The train stayed in the pathway of traffic at Orange and US 1 blocking vehicles on both sides of the track, for approximately 23 minutes. The vehicles began moving about where they could and some were able to take another, longer route to their businesses, doctors, and/or other pursuits on US 1. They were an irritated bunch, she promised me. Suddenly, as my hairdresser stood on the west side of the track, she observed an individual walking straight for the train. The walker threw what she was carrying through the train connector and began to climb on the coupling to pull herself through to the other side since the train was at a dead stop. She made it. Picked up her belongings and proceeded down the street! She said, further, that as soon as the woman made it across the coupling, the train moved! Again, my hairdresser remarked in amazement that had the woman been just a little slower, the train would have crushed her.

The point of my story, Mr. Winkle, is this: you must again analyze the **safety** situations at, at-ground crossings to determine real dangers from freight trains who stop, pull forward, couple and uncouple right in the middle of heavy traffic—pedestrian and vehicular--- in downtown Fort Pierce and throughout the Treasure Coast! This type of situation is deplorable and beyond belief when you consider how many freight trains will stop and pull over to other tracks to allow AAF trains high speed access to the tracks on their way to Disney World. What a horrific thought, a horrific safety hazard, an impossible scenario to image!

From the Treasure Coast perspective, nothing good will come of AAF’s plan to speed directly through the Treasure Coast. In fact, Mr. Winkle, with so many letters reaching you in which residents of this landscape denounce AAF and FRA for considering such a project, we will have much more to lose than our economy...we will likely lose lives along the way without careful reconsideration by FRA and its EIS.

Think about it.....

Suzie Smith

2400 South Ocean Drive, Apt. 4300A

Fort Pierce, FL 34949 vertricesmith@gmail.com

From: [Alice Ladomirak](#) on behalf of seedsowerfl@att.net
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Cc: [Tom Ladomirak](#)
Subject: AAF should go along the CSX Rail Road from West Palm Beach to Orlando.
Date: Monday, October 20, 2014 9:35:57 PM

If **AAF** thinks there is a need for service from West Palm Beach, Florida to Orlando, Florida they should consider following the Florida Turnpike or the CSX Rail Road right-a-way to lessen the impact on the Treasure Coast downtown areas and the Space Coast of Florida, or use elevated tracks so traffic can go under the rail traffic along the east coast of Florida. **Thank You. Thomas S. LADOMIRAK**

From: joey000245@aol.com
To: pnicoletti@ci.stuart.fl.us
Cc: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF Stop in Florida
Date: Saturday, November 22, 2014 11:47:47 AM

Please do not be pushing for a train stop in Stuart. We do not want the AAF running up the coast at all. Do not be looking for a train stop here to give them approval to run this train up the coast. This is a very bad idea!!!
You sure did not make any points with this idea!

Joe Galluccio
Jensen Beach, Fl.

From: [Robert Figueroa](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF Support Letters
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 2:18:39 PM
Attachments: [Support Letter - Economy and Jobs.docx](#)
[Support Letter - Environment.docx](#)
[Support Letter - General.docx](#)
[Support Letter - Transportation.docx](#)

Mr. Winkle,

I too support the AAF plproject.

Thanks,



From: [Schwab, Phil](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF support
Date: Monday, October 27, 2014 2:41:42 PM
Attachments: [image921aaf.gif@1d67700b.15a64771](#)
[AAF Support PS.pdf](#)

Please see attached letter of support for All Aboard Florida.

Regards,
Phil Schwab

Phil Schwab, PE

Vice President

3125 W Commercial Blvd, Suite 130

Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

Phone: 954-236-7386 / Mobile: 954-593-0042

Phil.Schwab@rsandh.com

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From: [Lawrence Pius](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF terminal locations
Date: Saturday, September 20, 2014 8:20:55 AM

Your plan to not have any train stations in the treasure Coast area is totally beyond absurd. There should be, at the very least, a stop in the Ft. Pierce area to serve Stuart, Port Saint Lucie and Vero Beach.

*Lawrence J. (Larry) Pius
542 NW Lambrusco Dr
Port Saint Lucie FL 34986
772-626-7840*

From: [Anne K. Stimmell](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF through Martin County
Date: Monday, September 29, 2014 5:11:23 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I have skimmed the Env. Impact Report, and correct me if I am wrong, but NO ONE has told us the truth yet about how SLOW the trains will have to go to take the 90 degree turn north, just 100-200 feet west of the Downtown Stuart Core RR bridge, and block our intersections. I did notice somewhere that the train's average speed would be slower through our county but that is AVERAGE. Just exactly HOW SLOW will the train have to go THROUGH STUART to navigate that turn? How much longer than average will OUR downtown crossings be closed to business and emergency traffic? And while we are on the subject, just how much longer will our downtown intersections be blocked by trains waiting their turn to pass over our 1 track RR Bridge?

There is no reason for these trains to pass through the core of downtown Stuart and slow down 2 major intersections that are within a mile of our hospital. These trains offer us NO benefit, and in fact, will be detrimental. They need to go west where there are far less lives to impact.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anne Krueger Stimmell
4th Generation resident of Stuart
Mother and Grandmother to Generations 5 and 6.

From: [Dean Baumgartner](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com; "john"
Subject: AAF Train Comments and Issues
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 12:37:31 PM

Train will cause terrible impact on our Community! AAF prepared documents were biases, false, and omitted the actual cost to our environment, our community, our health, our safety, our welfare.

-
Consider alternative TRAIN ROUTE... same result, less impact! I don't oppose have trains in Florida, but increasing the impact on our busiest most populated areas in absolute nuts I do oppose trains in the center of our coastal towns.

We've all read the wonderful (not) news about the All Aboard Florida proposal to send 16 more trains through the most densely populated areas of our counties each day between 6am and 9pm in addition to the already 7 freight trains moving through our town presently. Why? It just does not make sense, the mess created with freight traffic already causes bottlenecks. Would it not be more advantageous to move the All Aboard Florida rail usage to either along the interstate highway, the turnpike, or the CSX line that moves through Indiantown and the western rail corridor of our county? The Florida East Coast railway was located where it would produce the most economic good a century ago. **Today the eastern rail location is an economic burden,** an environmental hazard, a maritime disaster for boat traffic. Businesses, residential communities, Vehicular traffic, marine traffic, and even ambulances seeking routes to the hospital will all be seriously and negatively impacted by high speed rail moving through the small downtowns of East Coast Florida. There will be no trains stopping along our communities, there is no rationale for us to be impacted by needless congestions. The goal is to connect Orlando to Miami, then why not take a more direct route with the least repercussion on larger residential areas? Consider alternative TRAIN ROUTES ... meeting same goal, with less impact!

We have a 10 year old in elementary school, Frequently we are late to school now because of trains and the long lines of traffic waiting for the train to pass. There is no other route between our home and the school that does not require a train crossing. Even with the now freight trains, we have seen

Respectfully,

Dean Baumgartner
Home address: 20 Banyan Road Stuart, FL 34996

From: robert.benninkjr@gmail.com
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF Train proposal
Date: Monday, December 1, 2014 5:42:46 PM

John Winkle,

As a South Beach resident for three years and Florida resident/voter, my wife and I deplore the ruse AAF used to Disneyfy the train as a happy, fun filled way to get to Orlando! Panama Canal widening will double freight to the USA and Miami! That's where the profits are! Passenger trains do not make profits in the US, and government funding (taxes from us all!) not private support makes this a black hole to pour money down! 32 trains a day at 100 + MPH will sever the beach from the mainland, and be a serious economic blow for all business on both sides on the rail. Saddling counties with huge infrastructure costs for a some distant corporation the counties neither wanted nor would derive any benefit! I suspect subsidies and bail outs and train wrecks in the futures!

Rob and Cynthia Bennink

2160 Via Fuentes

Vero Beach FL 33963

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Barbara Layman](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF train routing
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 10:21:13 AM

The direction and number of daily trains will end up causing irreparable harm and major problems for all the towns and adjoining areas from Jupiter all the way North past Melbourne where AAF plans to go.. Why purposely plan to incur the wrath of so many thousands of people..??

Why not plan to develop a monorail system that has been so successful and profitable in other parts of the world. Running these rails next to the Florida Turnpike makes much more sense..

Barbara Layman

From: [Michael Sweet](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF Train
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 7:00:15 AM

Sirs: I am 100% opposed to AAF for a myriad of reasons which have been enumerated endlessly. The train will run through the heart of Stuart and will cause much disruption. Marine traffic will definitely be severely impacted at the RR tressel at the Roosevelt Bridge. Quality of life will suffer. There will be no economic benefit to our area. Future increases in freight traffic are a certainty.

My recommendation is to MOVE IT WEST, along the turnpike right of way. Expensive? Yes. But the right way to go. Again, I am 100% opposed to the current plan. Michael E Sweet,MD.

From: [David Fitzgerald](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF Train
Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2014 10:42:51 AM

We live on North Hutchinson Island and with the heavy train traffic that doesn't even stop in our area our marine, fire, and rescue services will be greatly impacted. We are totally against the AAF train.

David J Fitzgerald
North Hutchinson Island
Fort Pierce Fl 34949

From: [Rgibbons5343](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF will destroy Treasure Coast
Date: Monday, October 13, 2014 1:25:50 PM

Sirs,

My wife and I are opposed to All Aboard Florida (name should be "All About Freight").

AAF as planned, will destroy quality of life for thousands of us who live east of US 1 and A1A:

- * Endanger health & safety by delayed response times of First Responders: EMT's, Law Enforcement, Fire;
- * Reduce/delay access to Hospitals & Medical services for residents of Treasure Coast;
- * Increase noise and infrastructure vibrations on homes and businesses;
- * Negatively impact Real Estate values and reduce Tourism revenues;
- * Endanger maritime industries and boating activities.

All in all, AAF is a DISASTER and should be stopped "in it's tracks"!

We are not opposed to trains, but urge the route to go west of Florida Turnpike!

Sincerely,
Robert and Brenda Gibbons
Stuart FL 34997

From: [Jason Dickinson](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF will Ruin Stuart, FL
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 9:20:40 AM

AAF will ruin Stuart, Florida. Stuart has a beautiful downtown area which is the heart of Stuart, and AAF will completely change this for the worse, against Martin County residents, with your decisions. When you build your train tracks from West Palm to Orlando, build it in west Martin County. Stuart is not like Miami and other South Florida cities, in that we have figured out a way to be vibrant, alive, successful, safe and thriving while maintaining a peaceful, calm, fairly stress-free environment. It has not been easy for Stuart and Martin County to do. We have had to say no to big businesses and high rise condos and other offers that bring big money. We have said no to big growth for the sake of a peaceful community. Everything Stuart and Martin County have tried so hard to keep, will be gone, completely against our will. The biggest benefit to living in the Stuart area is it has resisted the noise that AAF would bring. To make it worse, AAF wants to bring the train directly through the heart of the best and biggest part of our city that we have tried so hard to keep great and grow in a wonderful manner.

Also, one of the main industries of Stuart, Martin Memorial Hospital, will suffer. I am concerned with the many stories how the ambulances will take longer to get to the hospital. The tracks are very close to the hospital so almost all ambulances will be affected. The age of residents and snowbirds in this town is above average to be kind, and ambulance timing is of great concern.

Finally, have you looked at the train bridge that goes over the St Lucie River? It appears to be in horrible shape and creating more train traffic on that old rusty bridge seems like a terrible idea. Furthermore, one huge benefit to living in this area is affordable waterfront property. Many people will be "blocked" in, and not able to go outside of the north and south fork of the St Lucie river. The problem may not be the speed of your trains, it is the speed at which the train bridge on the St Lucie river goes up and down. It takes a long long time currently. Creating a back up of boats with the current ripping as it does there will be very unsafe. Go on a boat on a Saturday morning when the bridge is down and you will see.

The property value of the many many homes on that side of the train bridge will go down a lot with the train as that St Lucie train bridge will make boating and getting to the inlet, sandbar and restaurants almost impossible.

When you build your train tracks from West Palm to Orlando, build it in west Martin County, where it won't completely ruin the livelihoods, values, safety and environment of Stuart, Palm City, Jensen Beach and many other areas in, and outside of, Martin County.

Feel free to ask me any questions.

Jason Dickinson

From: [Mark Waldbauer](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF will ruin Stuart
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 8:11:49 AM

I do not support AAF. These trains will make getting down town and to the beaches very difficult with the added trains not to mention slowing down boat traffic. It will also have a negative impact with Sailfish Park baseball fields being so close.

From: [ray coffey](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Saturday, September 20, 2014 9:40:35 AM

This is bullshit, and a total waste of money. We do not need this service. What we need is highways going east to west in Florida. We have Rt. 60, and the ally to Naples, and that is it. Traffic from Miami to the Treasure coast will be trapped by these trains. The is a hustle by land developers and others to get rich. I will move out of the east coast of Florida when this happens. Roads are the answer, not trains. Look at the usage of AM Track!

From: jamesavastano@comcast.net
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: aaf
Date: Friday, November 28, 2014 3:12:39 PM

There are many reasons to be opposed to this blatant money grab, many which have already been voiced at meetings and in editorials. One I would like to address is the negative effect this will have on property values. I live in Stuart, on the water. This proposed train puts myself and my whole neighborhood on the "wrong side of the tracks" as it pertains to getting out of the St Lucie river. We all have paid the extra dollars to enjoy the boating lifestyle both in purchase price and appraised value affecting tax valuation. I am sure the powers that be at AAF could care less about this, but all of us have worked hard to live where we live, and now our investment will be negatively affected. These ex Disney execs care only about lining their own pockets. I will join and donate to any group that forms to fight this company's effort to ruin our lifestyle that I already have invested in, in court if need be

James A Savastano
Stuart, FL

From: [Frank Pirillo](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Monday, September 22, 2014 2:15:00 PM

My wife and I moved to Stuart just over two years ago. We love it here and we especially love the downtown area, the beaches and the waterways. We love the Lyric Theater and the outdoor cafe's downtown.

What we don't like is the rumble and the noise when a train goes through. I have been at a concert at the Lyric when a freight train goes through and you can feel the vibrations in your seat and hear the whistles. I can't even imagine what it would be like with 32 plus trains going through each day.

As I drive through Port St. Lucie, I see all the houses for sale that are located near the tracks. These poor people are going to take a financial beating because of this proposed AAF.

Stuart will never be the same and the overall damage that will be done to the Treasure Coast will be devastating. Who will want to take the blame for that?

Most of us know that the underlying reason for all of this is the increased number of freight trains that are expected with the expansion of the Panama Canal. This will only make matters worse.

The real answer to this is to run new rails down the center of the state where disruption will be minimal. Get Amtrak to allow AAF to use their rails and put this AAF to rest.

Thanks you for you time on this matter!

Frank and Connie Pirillo
Stuart, FL

From: ms6045@aol.com
To: AAF_Comments@vfb.com
Subject: aaf
Date: Monday, December 1, 2014 1:20:39 PM

Dear Sirs,

I think your idea of train travel in Florida is great. However the proposed plan of having trains coming through downtown Fort Pierce and the rest of our cities in St. Lucie, Indian River and Martin counties numerous times per day is a terrible idea. Please move the tracks west of the city where there is a far fewer number of people living. The Treasure Coast is simply not ready for this type of activity. It would seem to me for the need of speed, west of the city would make perfect sense. Even if you had a stop in Ft Pierce which would be awesome, I would still beg of you to move it miles west of the city limits.

Thank You
Merle Simpson
6045 Whippoorwill Lane
PSL, Fl. 34987
772.979.2081
ms6045@aol.com

From: [Dee deWaal](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Sunday, September 21, 2014 1:09:43 PM

All Aboard Florida is destructive to Martin County. If it materializes I see this area becoming like the Riveria Beach and the Lake Worth area. This will become a corridor of double stacked container trains.

Yacht clubs and homeowners on the St. Lucie river south and north forks will be deprived easy access to the ocean. Seasonal boaters that enjoy mooring here may not come---.Property values will plummet--- This will affect cross state boating via the St Lucie Locks.---It is almost impossible to see how AAF got this far without more opposition.

What is our chamber of commerce's position?

Dolores deWaal
Palm City, FL

From: [Jack](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vzb.com
Subject: aaf
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 8:30:57 AM

Dumbest idea ever

From: [Marilyn Brownie](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 8:37:56 PM

Please do not move forward with AAF. I live within a few hundred feet from the tracks.
I find it unlikely that there are so many people that need to go back and forth to Orlando and Miami 16 times in one day.

This is a huge inconvenience to the people living by the tracks.

Must there really be that many trips? It just seems very excessive and makes one suspicious of possible alternative motives.

Thank you.

Marilyn Brownie

From: barbcrazed2@aol.com
To: AAF_Comments@vzb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Monday, September 22, 2014 6:52:43 PM

Mr John Winkle

Please, please, please consider the long term effects of an unpopular proposed train.

I can only see negative outcomes, and NOTHING positive for those of us who are fortunate enough to live in heaven, the Treasure Coast.

Thirty two additional trains daily will interrupt our lives in so many ways. The closing of crossings during peak hours will keep us sitting and idling for an additional 2 hours and 40 minutes, I've heard many say. So in that 2 hour 40 minute span, how many emergency/rescue vehicles will sit without supplying the help needed? How many people will be inconvenienced? How many people will try to jump the crossing, resulting in a fatality?

Let's consider the closing of the railroad bridges over waterways. They certainly take much longer, the estimates I've heard are 28 minutes for each closing, resulting in 16+ hours a day. How much fuel will be used idling while waiting? How about fighting the strong tides and currents, circling with other boats stacking up, hoping there is sufficient room for all to keep turning and circling? Surely our thriving marine industry will feel the negative effects of such a fiasco.

What about the residents in the houses near the tracks? Right now they see/hear a few freight trains a day rumbling slowly by, and think it's charming. How charming is a roaring speeding train going past 32 times? Not very. Property values will decline, and heaven forbid, with interrupted sleep, our residents will get grouchy. Do you live on or near the tracks? More un-sellable houses will stay on the market, possibly creating another turndown in economy.

We, on the Treasure Coast, will not realize any benefit. Can we ride this wonder train? No, it won't make any stops. Can our merchants depend on passengers spending money here? No, that will be in Orlando or Miami. Is it Beautiful? Peaceful? Helpful? No, No, and NO.

Barbara and Edward DeMarco
4820 SE Mariner Village Ln
Stuart, FL 34997

From: [Susan McDonald](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2014 9:19:11 AM

Sent from my iPad.

I do not understand how the state of Florida would allow AAF to devalue some of the most beautiful and valuable property along the waterways and ocean on the east coast, not to mention the killing of many wild animals. Is the profit to Florida from AAF more valuable then the properties?

Susan McDonald
susu0491@gmail

From: [Dee deWaal](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vnb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2014 4:10:09 PM

Subject: AAF

Why have we not had any serious pressure from our elected officials to put a compete stop to AAF years ago? Money? Who is to blame? Why the big secret for all these years??

From: [Gloria Spiess](#)
To: AAF_Comments@vhb.com
Subject: AAF
Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 9:05:34 AM

I do not want AAF and neither do the other residents of Vero Beach. There is no need to discuss improving RR crossings, train tracks or how fast the trains will move. We do not want fast trains plowing through our community and disrupting traffic and increasing noise.

Forget it. We do not want the fast trains and extra freight.

Gloria Spiess

Sent from my iPad